



RECOMMENDATIONS.

*From Rev. G. F. Davis, D. D., pastor of the First Baptist Church
in Hartford.*

I have examined a considerable portion of "The Antidote, or Infidelity Repulsed and Revelation Defended," in a course of lectures, by Rev. George Coles. I have carefully read the Introductory Lecture, and the lectures on the Inspiration of the Scriptures, the Folly of Infidelity, the Wisdom of Believing, the Divinity of Christ, the Personality, Divinity, and Offices of the Holy Spirit, the Attributes of God, Human Depravity, and the Atonement of Christ.

Judging from those lectures that I have read, I feel no hesitation in recommending the Antidote as a valuable production, and well adapted to do good in these days of infidelity, heresy, and irreligion. The plan is natural, the style perspicuous, the argument logical, the illustrations familiar and forcible. The reader will find the sentiments of the author, on the most important subjects, sustained by abundant scriptural proofs, and numerous quotations from some of the most learned and respectable authors. The writer modestly remarks that his "Lectures are not intended to supercede the necessity of consulting larger works, but are rather intended to direct the attention to those works." It must be admitted that his selections are as judicious and appropriate as they are ample.

All who are desirous of checking the progress of infidelity, now stalking abroad in our land, and asserting its claims with unblushing effrontery; and all who would counteract the baleful influence of those heretical opinions which various errorists are broaching and endeavoring to establish in our American Israel, will do well to give countenance and patronage to this course of lectures.

GUSTAVUS F. DAVIS.

Hartford, Sept. 1835.

*From the Rev. T. C. Brownell, D. D. LL. D., Bishop of the Protestant
Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Connecticut, &c.*

Rev. and Dear Sir,—

I am just about to leave home, on a long visitation, and have not time to examine the manuscript of your proposed "ANTIDOTE." I perceive that the table of contents embraces a series of interesting topics; and I think such a work is particularly called for by the circumstances of the times. Hoping it may do much good, I remain, very truly,

Your Friend and Brother,

T. C. BROWNELL.

Hartford, Oct. 8, 1835.

REV. MR. COLES.

*From Rev. Wilbur Fisk, D. D. President of the Wesleyan University,
Middletown.*

Rev. and Dear Sir,—

Having read parts of your manuscript lectures, entitled, "Revelation Defended and Infidelity Repulsed," and having examined the general arrangement of the work, and your manner of executing it, I take pleasure in ex-

pressing to you my opinion, that it is calculated to be useful to the public, and I should recommend you to have it published. Whoever reads the work will, I doubt not, find therein, interest and instruction.

Affectionately yours,

W. FISK.

Wesleyan University, Middletown, Ct. Aug. 21, 1835.

From the Rev. F. Reed, Agent of the Wesleyan University.

Having read a part of the manuscript, I cheerfully concur in the above recommendation.

F. REED.

From the Rev. J. Holdich, A. M. Professor of Intellectual and Moral Philosophy and Belles Lettres in the Wesleyan University.

Rev. and Dear Brother,—

Having examined, as far as opportunity would permit, the MS., I am prepared to say, that I believe your production well calculated to benefit the rising generation, for whose sake chiefly, you design to publish. The subject is highly important and interesting; and to fortify the youthful mind against the seducing spirit of the age, by the implantation of sound religious principle, is essential to their happiness and welfare in this world, and in that which is to come.

I therefore sincerely wish you success in your undertaking; and that your work may be the means of unspeakable benefit to many.

I am, with sincere respect, yours, truly,

JOSEPH HOLDICH.

From the Rev. S. Martindale, Presiding Elder of the New Haven District.

REV. G. COLES,

Sir,—Having heard you read several parts of a manuscript entitled, “The Antidote,” I think, at this time, such a work is likely to do good. Our country seems to be overrun with a low infidelity, which I think your lectures are calculated to meet with some effect.

Yours truly,

S. MARTINDALE.

Middletown Conn. Nov. 8, 1835.

From Mrs. Sigourney.

I have read, with pleasure, such parts of the “Lectures” of the Rev. Mr. Coles, as have been submitted to my perusal; and think that the extensive biblical knowledge and research which they display, as well as the collateral evidence which they exhibit, from the annals of history, and the writings of illustrious men, constitute a powerful and lucid body of argument, in proof of the authenticity of that sacred word in which is our hope.

L. H. SIGOURNEY.

THE ANTIDOTE.

THE FIFTEEN

THE
ANTIDOTE,
OR
REVELATION DEFENDED,
AND
INFIDELITY REPULSED;
IN A
COURSE OF LECTURES.

17

BY GEORGE COLES.



"The man who studies Scripture with the humility and the reverence to which alone its fullness will be expanded, is constantly struck with indications of facts beyond the direct grasp of the understanding."—REV. G. CROLY.

HARTFORD:
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ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS work owes its origin to the following circumstances : The Trustees of the Methodist Church in Poughkeepsie, N. Y., in which the author preached in the summer of 1834, requested to have the Sabbath evening service at six o'clock, instead of eight. But by some of the congregation it was feared that we should have but very few hearers. To obviate this difficulty, if possible, the author gave out, that he would deliver a course of Lectures, on some of the principal doctrines of the church to which he belonged ; and in order that he might state them correctly, he *wrote* them out at full length, and *read* them to the audience. This plan being somewhat novel, possessed some little attraction, and thereby a respectable congregation was secured.

Another circumstance, and a very important one, in the mind of the writer, was the publication of a new periodical, under the imposing title of "The Herald of Reason and Common Sense:"—a work in which some of the doctrines of the Bible, and some of the ordinances of our holy religion were held up to public contempt; and a work in which there was a strange mixture of Atheism, Deism, Materialism, Socinianism, Universalism, and Heresy of almost every kind, and as little of *pure Religion*, sound "*Reason*," and good "*Common Sense*," as if it had been avowedly Infidel. The writer of these strictures, therefore, thought it a duty incumbent upon him to lift his voice, and employ his pen, in checking the progress of those fatal errors, and in guarding the youth of his acquaintance against the mischievous tendency of Infidelity, in every form ; but in doing this, he could not lay claim to any thing like *originality* :—So many learn-

ADVERTISEMENT.

ed and elaborate books have been written ;—so many eloquent and powerful sermons have been preached, and published ; and so many able, convincing, and irresistible arguments have been urged in defence of Christianity, that it cannot be expected that the author of these Lectures has found out any thing *very original*, either in argument or illustration. If, however, there is not much that is properly *original*, there will be found, notwithstanding, a very considerable *variety*. The reader will sometimes find himself with Moses on the Mount ; then with Joshua in the camp of Israel ; with David, singing to his harp ; with the Prophets, rapt in vision ; and with the Apostles and their blessed Master, in the valley of humiliation. Anon he will find himself in company with some of the ablest advocates of Christianity and sound theology, that the world has produced, which may, it is hoped, cause him to wish for farther acquaintance with those great and venerable authors. Happy will the writer be, if he shall be the humble instrument of leading any of his younger brethren in the ministry to the more diligent study of these deeply interesting subjects, or a Sabbath school teacher, or member of a Bible class, to the perusal of those invaluable works so often referred to in these pages.

* * The subscribers to this work will perceive an omission of two or three subjects named in the prospectus, in place of which they will find several others brought forward, equally important, and, it is hoped, far more interesting.

G. COLES.

Hartford, Nov. 20, 1835.

THE
ANTIDOTE,
OR
REVELATION DEFENDED.
AND
INFIDELITY REPULSED,

EXHIBIT

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF

JAMES H. HARRIS, DECEASED

LECTURES, &c.

INTRODUCTORY LECTURE,

Containing a brief view of the present state of the world, the claims of Christianity, Missionary operations, character and efforts of Infidelity, &c.

AT the present moment, there is, in the very heart of the Christian world, a principle directly subversive of the *faith* once delivered to the saints, the *hope* of the gospel, and that *charity* which is the bond of perfectness. It claims to be the friend of man, but it is, in truth, his greatest enemy. It offers to guide the wanderer through the wilderness of this world, and over the stormy ocean of life, but it only bewilders and misleads in the one case, and diverts and draws aside from the proper course in the other. Its watchword is, "Beware of superstition and priestcraft, and the union of church and state." Its motto is, "Reason, Equality, and Liberty." Its boast is, "Superior intelligence, and common sense;" and its continual cry is, "Down with religion and fanaticism." Its proper name is **INFIDELITY.**

It is the first born of Apollyon, and is the determined enemy of God, of man, and of all righteousness.

In direct opposition to this, there is another principle, which, like its author, came down from heaven, and “is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.”

Between these two principles there is an avowed hostility, and so far as human agency is concerned, it remains for Christians to say which shall prevail. That victory will be eventually proclaimed on the side of Immanuel, admits of no question; “For he must reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet;” but that Christians are justifiable in remaining at ease in Zion, while the whole world lieth in wickedness—standing all the day idle, while so many are destroyed for lack of knowledge, admits of a doubt.

The superior excellency of Christianity above every other form of religion, is admitted by all who have examined, with an eye of candor, the comparative claims of each. As a light to guide our feet into the way of peace, its claims are pre-eminent. As a balm to heal the wounded conscience, it stands unrivalled. As offering the only foundation on which it is safe to build our hopes in life and in death, it has proved itself all-sufficient, and in the case of those who have long been the victims of contending claims, and to those who have turned away from every other help and have fled to lay hold on the hope it sets before them, it has proved itself a refuge in time of trouble. As a system of doctrines, it is sublime and pure, worthy the character of God and the

acceptance of man. As a code of laws, its excellency is undisputed—its precepts have been eulogized even by its enemies ! Its predictions bear the marks of inspiration, and relate to the grandest features of human history.

The resurrection of the dead—the final judgment of all mankind, and the eternal destinies of all created intelligences, are also among its revelations. Its promises are eminently calculated to support the mind of the sinking penitent, the afflicted believer, the persecuted disciple, and the dying saint, and its faithful warnings have been the means of turning many to righteousness, who shall “shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever.”

The rites and ceremonies of pure Christianity are few and simple, and easily comprehended ; its yoke is easy and its burden is light. It requires no pilgrimages but those of faith, and prayer, and love ; the first to the cross ; the second to the throne of grace ; and the last to the abodes of affliction and want. It enjoins no penance but that of unfeigned sorrow for sin, and a life of self-denial. To the guilty it offers pardon without money and without price. To the weary and heavy laden, it affords rest ; and to the troubled, peace. Judaism, in comparison of Christianity, is as the light of the moon to the light of the sun ; while Mahommedanism and Paganism are as the glimmering of the stars ; and Infidelity is as a sky obscured by clouds, whose angry thunders roll, and vivid lightnings flash but to alarm and terrify, and whose meteors blaze but to astonish and affright.

The most distinguishing feature of the Christian religion is, LOVE. "God so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son." "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." "Love worketh not ill to his neighbor." "Love your enemies," says Christ, "bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." From the overflowing fountain of infinite goodness the Christian derives the principle of love, and in imitation of the example of "Him who loved us, and gave himself for us," he exercises himself in the work of benevolence.

To Christianity the world is indebted for all that is worthy of the name of charity. What institutions for the relief of suffering humanity has it not founded? What associations for the bettering of the condition of the poor, has it not formed? What energies has it not employed to rescue man from the degradation of sin? What sacrifices has it not made? What sufferings has it not endured, in order to lessen human woe, and increase human happiness? "To dissipate the most accumulated ignorance—to put to shame the boldest vice—to correct all manner of irregularities in society—to subdue the most inveterate enmity to God, and hatred to man—to root out wickedness from the earth, and to

restore peace on earth and good will to man, it has lent its influence and its councils, its eloquence and its prayers." To rescue the slave of sin, and to let the oppressed go free, it has given its gold and the blood of its martyrs. Where are the ignorant it has not offered to instruct—the vicious it has not endeavored to reclaim—the profligate it has not assayed to reform—the abandoned it has not directed to a better course?

Behold, in Christianity, the oppressed praying for the tyrant, and the injured forgiving the aggressor! If the Christian religion be what it professes to be, a revelation from God, if its doctrines, its precepts, its promises, and its predictions be in harmony with the character of an all-perfect Being, and the best interests of man; if the evidence of its divine origin be clear and convincing, and the truth of its alleged facts can be demonstrated; if in comparison of this, the Mosaic economy, which was evidently of God, were only "the shadow of good things to come, and could never make the comers thereunto perfect"—if that dispensation had no glory in comparison of this, may we not safely conclude that it was the design of heaven that this religion, which, at the first, was as "a handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains," should fill the earth with its fruit?

If, again, compared with this divine system, all others are but gross impostures, having their origin in the pride and ambition of the human heart, being so framed as to foster and gratify every corrupt propensity of an evil nature, and requiring the power of the sword to defend them, and the sanction of re-

mote antiquity or kingly power to keep them in countenance, does it not follow that that dispensation which was to "bring in an everlasting righteousness, and make an end of sin," should be the one that infinite mercy designed to break in pieces and destroy every opposing interest, and should stand forever and forever ?

If, once more, there be no other system which offers pardon to the guilty, reconciliation to the penitent offender, adoption to the stranger and the outcast, purity to the polluted, peace to the disconsolate, and hope to the dying, is it not desirable that this should prevail, that this way of our God should be known in all the earth, and this, his saving health, in all nations ?

There is one feature of the religion of Christ, which its advocates are apt to overlook—the obligations which it imposes upon its friends and followers to improve their talents, to let their light so shine before men that they may see their good works, and glorify their Father who is in heaven. The principles of reciprocal kindness, and of active benevolence, are strongly inculcated by the founder of the Christian religion. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another." "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." "Be ye therefore merciful as your Father in heaven is merciful." "Freely ye have received, therefore freely give."

That these principles may be brought into successful operation, it seems necessary that Christians should make themselves thoroughly acquainted with the present moral condition of the world,

and of the spiritual wants of their fellow men. On the supposition that the world contains 800 millions of inhabitants, and that 600 millions of that number are destitute of the blessings of Christianity, we see at once how much the exertions of Christians are needed, in order that the world may become evangelized.

Part of the above 600 millions, it is true, (the Jews) have “the lively oracles of God,” which they may consult; but, alas! alas! the veil is on their heart. Their temple has fallen—their prophets are dead—their priesthood has vanished. For them, no Moses now lifts his rod to guide them through the desert, or strike the flinty rock whence living waters flow; no Aaron offers incense, or Joshua draws his sword; no pillar of a cloud overshadows them by day, or illuminates them by night; no manna falls from heaven around their tents, or trump of Jubilee proclaims their captives free. Not even so much as a dispensation of miracles, and types and shadows of good things to come, proclaims to them that the day of their redemption draws nigh.

“See where o’er desert wastes they err,
And neither food nor feeder have;
Nor fold, nor place of refuge near;
For no man cares their souls to save.”

They were, indeed, the natural branches of the good olive tree, but they are now broken off, and lie withering on the ground. The tree itself is, in a certain sense, cut down, the branches are cut off, the leaves and the fruit are scattered, the beasts are

gone away from under it, and the birds from among its branches ; yet the stump of its roots remains in the earth, and ere long, perhaps, it will sprout again. Or, to use another figure with which the prophet Ezekiel has furnished us, the whole house of Israel is like a valley full of dry bones, *very many and very dry!* and it seems to be duty of all living Christians to prophesy to the wind, and to say,—Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain that they may live. The condition of the Jews at the present time, though not altogether hopeless, is somewhat like that of Saul when he went to inquire of the woman who had a familiar spirit—the Lord answers them not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. What wonder, then, as was the case lately with one of their scientific men in New York, that they take refuge from their guilty fears in the dark and dreary caverns of Infidelity, where, so to speak, they may be represented as calling to the rocks and mountains to fall on them, to hide them from the presence of their fathers' God, and from the wrath of the Lamb. Their present history is but the fulfilment of some of the severest threatenings of their inspired prophets, and while it is a confirmation of the truth of the holy scriptures, it shows to a wondering world how fearful a thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God.

But is there no one to be found who will seek these lost sheep of the house of Israel, who will copy the example of Paul, and go into their synagogues on the Sabbath day and reason with them out of the scriptures, and open and alledge that

Christ must needs have suffered and rise again from the dead ; and prove that the Saviour, whom we Christians preach, and in whom we believe, is Christ. Can no Apollos now be found like him of old, both eloquent and mighty in the scriptures, who shall mightily convince them, and that publicly, showing, by the scriptures, that Jesus is Christ ?

Would it not be well for the Christian world, and especially those designed for missionaries, to read over again the lives and labors of a Buchanan, a Martyn, a Richmond, a Henderson, a Wolffe, a Parsons, a Fisk, with the view of obtaining all the information that can be obtained respecting that long forsaken and greatly neglected people ? Would it not be well for pious young men, studying for the ministry, to make themselves more thoroughly acquainted with Jewish history, and the Hebrew language, with the view of being useful to that people ? And would it not be well for Christians generally, on their rogation days, to remember the promises of God to his ancient people, and plead them in behalf of that part of his " heritage " which has so long been " given to reproaches ?"

The Mahommedans are a numerous and powerful people, and by their victorious arms have laid waste some of the once fairest portions of the globe, and have erected the crescent in the very place where the cross once stood, and where it ought still to stand. These fertile and thickly peopled fields lying remote from the regions of Protestant Christianity, are not likely, in the ordinary course of things, to present an open door for the preaching of the

pure gospel of Christ. "It is an affecting proof" says the editor of the London Wesleyan Methodist Magazine, "of the corrupt state of our world, that even religion has not been able to escape its contamination, and that the very remedy provided to relieve the diseases of our fallen nature, should have become so deeply impregnated with the poison of the disease. That the preliminaries of a system of religion, perfectly adapted to the wants and woes of man, were delivered to the patriarchs of old, is evident from the records of divine revelation. The truth however, did not long continue incorrupt and unmingled with human folly, with the imaginings of a vain philosophy, and with the grosser absurdities of vulgar superstition. Its principles were rapidly moulded into various systems of idolatry and mythology, and became the nucleus in different nations, of the most monstrous and polluting forms of religion, many of which remain to this day, spreading corruption and degradation through all ranks and classes of a great portion of mankind. The truth, to be sure, found refuge in Judaism; and in Christianity it acquired its full manifestation; but at length, even there it assumed corrupted forms. From Judaism sprang the errors of the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Rabbins; and in the midst of Christianity, before the apostles left the world, the mystery of iniquity began to work, producing, at length, all the superstitions of Rome, and making way for the still worse delusions of the Arabian impostor."

From the conquests of Mohammedanism, we turn our attention to the strong holds of Paganism. The great mass of population in Asia, Australasia, Poly-

nesia, and the western parts of North America, together with a great portion of Africa, are Pagans, amounting to more than half the population of the globe. These worshippers of idols, and of "lords many, and gods many," are in a most fearful case. In every age and country where the religion of Jehovah has not been established, the condition of the people has been characterized by crude, erroneous, and derogatory notions of the deity ; by debasing systems of worship, connected with impure and sanguinary rites ; by despotism in government ; by the arbitrary disposal of human life ; by the exercise of cruelty to the weaker sex, and especially to the inferior order of domestics ; by the wilful and wicked neglect of of parents in sickness and age, and by the wanton murder of children.

Even in polished Greece and Rome, the lives of slaves were less regarded than those of beasts, and if the voice of history be correct, the Moguls on the northern provinces of China, coolly and deliberately resolved to exterminate all the inhabitants of that populous country, to make room for their own cattle, which horrid resolution was prevented only by the vigor and wisdom of a Chinese mandarin. The custom of heathen nations of offering up human sacrifices, is too well known to require proof. We are informed by ancient historians, that the Ethiopians were required, by their laws, to sacrifice boys to the sun, and girls to the moon. The Phenicians, in times of great calamity sacrificed the dearest of their offspring. The Scythians sacrificed every hundredth prisoner to their god Mars. Among the Egyptians, the accidental killing of a cat was a cap-

ital offence, but if a man was found with red hair, he was sacrificed to one of their gods. Of the Canaanites we know that the burning of their sons and daughters in the fire, was one of their most common sins. The Persians offered up human victims by inhumation, inclosing them in sepulchral caverns. The custom of the Gallic Druids was to set up an immense figure of a man in wicker work, in which they enclosed a hundred victims, and then consume the whole as an offering to their gods. Other ancient nations were equally guilty in these things, and the most reputable Spanish historians inform us that the Peruvians devoted 200 children every year, for the health of the Ynca, and that Montezuma, the last reigning monarch of the Mexicans, annually offered up 20,000 human victims to the sun.

These accounts, collected from the writings of Cesar, Plutarch, Eusebius, Tacitus, Pliny, Rollin, and Gibbon, are but too faithful a counterpart of the picture of what our modern missionaries have told us respecting the heathen of the present day. If we had not heard, in our own times, of the horrors of infanticide, of the immolations of Juggernaut, and of the burning and burying of widows alive in India, we might have been disposed to account those statements fabulous, but the enterprize of modern missionaries has developed scenes as revolting, as degrading, and as afflicting as the united testimony of ancient historians.

This then, is the true state of the case, as nearly as can be ascertained,—more than half the world is “wholly given to idolatry,” and of the lesser division, a great portion is overrun with Mahomedan

delusion, or some other errors fatal to the well being of man. With these views of the matter, what can be done? Where is the leaven to be found that shall leaven the whole lump? Is it in Christianity, and Christianity alone? Summon then, the whole world together to one meeting, and put the question to vote,—“Shall the Maker of this world govern it; and shall he, and he alone be the object of religious worship?” More than half the world would say, “We have never heard his name.” Then let his name be sounded aloud, that every one may hear. The reply would be, “We know him not; Budhu, Vishnu, Lama, and Confucius, we know, but of Jehovah we know nothing.” Then tell them that “there is but one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus,” and then put it to vote, “Shall this God be your God, and this Christ your Saviour?” The Pagans, to a man, would say, “Give us the gods our fathers worshipped; as for this God, we know him not, nor desire the knowledge of his ways.” The Jews would call for a division of the question. They would say, “The Lord Jehovah shall be our God; but as for the man Christ Jesus, we will not have him to reign over us.” The Mahomedans would propose an amendment. They would say, “Let us have the God of heaven for our God, but Mahomet shall be our prophet, and the Koran our guide.” Then lay before the assembly the Bible, containing the Old and New Testaments—read the prophecies concerning Christ in the Old Testament, and show their exact fulfilment in him, from the New, and then put the final question, “Shall the religion of Jesus

Christ be the religion of the world?" The Pagan would say, 'No,'—the Mahommedan and the Jew would say, 'No'—and the Infidel too would say, 'No.' Thus we should find ourselves outvoted by perhaps five to one.

Now, on the supposition that the Christian religion is the only one worthy of God, and of the acceptance of man, this is an alarming consideration; and what increases the surprise is, that we now live in nearly the six thousandth year of the world, and the two thousandth of the Christian era. What has the world been doing for more than five thousand years, that so great a part of it does not even know the name of Him who made it? And what have the Christians been doing, that now nearly two thousand years have elapsed since the establishment of Christianity, and the world is not half Christianized yet?

If the apostles had lived to this time, would they have suffered things to be as they now are? Why, in less than fifty years from the resurrection of Christ, that lowly, feeble band, without the adventitious aid of wealth, and power, and worldly influence, and with but little of human learning and eloquence, carried the gospel into almost every part of the Roman empire. Hear the apostle Paul,—“From Jerusalem round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.” In another place, speaking of the gospel, he says, “It was preached to every creature under heaven;” and in another, speaking of the labors of his colleagues, he says, “Their sound is gone out into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.” “So

mightily grew the word of God and prevailed," in the days of those first heralds of the cross.

It must not be forgotten that the facilities for carrying the gospel into remote parts of the world, are now much greater than they were in the days of the apostles. The science of navigation has been greatly improved, and nations far remote are brought nigh by the improvements that have been made in the mariner's art. Commerce, also, has opened an intercourse with nations that were once esteemed so barbarous that it was considered dangerous to approach them; while, by the aid of printing, books may be multiplied to almost any extent, and knowledge diffused with wonderful rapidity. From accounts transmitted to us by those who have explored heathen countries, we learn that in many places "the fields are white already to harvest." The Rev. Henry Martyn, of the Church Missionary Society, has penetrated Persia. The Rev. Mr. Wolff, of the London Missionary Society has gone into Turkey. Messrs. Pliny, Parsons, Fisk, and others, of the American Board, have visited Palestine. A goodly band have gone to Ceylon and continental India, among whom the names of Ward, Wade, and Judson, of the Baptist church, are conspicuous. A Morrison has mastered the Chinese language, and opened the way for the circulation of the Bible in that vast empire, while a Gutzlaff, of the Danish Missionary Society, is availing himself of this propitious circumstance, and scattering the seed of heavenly truth in almost every direction. The Moravians have broken up the soil in Greenland, Labrador, Iceland, and the West Indies.

The Methodist Missionary Society in England has now about 230 missionaries in the field, scattered over a vast extent of territory in all the four quarters of the globe. This society expends annually from \$230,000 to \$240,000 in the missionary cause, and numbers about 40,000 church members, the fruits of missionary toil. The American Board of Foreign Missions have purposed, with the leave of Providence, to send forth, as soon as suitable men can be obtained, 40 missionaries to Asia, Africa, and some parts of Europe, and 20 or more to the different tribes of Indians of this country. The Baptist and Episcopal churches are not only *alive*, but *awake* to this all important subject, and the Methodist Episcopal church have at last emptied their treasury and replenished it again, with a munificence worthy of the cause, and the age in which we live.

But while such exertions are making on the part of Christians, to enlighten and bless the world with the healing beams of our most holy religion, the enemies of the cross of Christ are as vigilant as the common adversary of mankind in sowing the tares of Infidelity—in poisoning the streams of literature—in diverting the minds of youth from the consideration of religion, and in endeavoring to shake the faith of believers. The Bible is denounced as an old and silly book, unworthy of God, and injurious to man. Too many, even in the Christian's country, are found to depart from the faith, "giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils." It is truly surprising to observe in how many forms and fashions Infidelity appeareth. We may say of it as the late learned Dr. Barrow once said of *Wit*;

“It is a thing so versatile and multiform, appearing in so many shapes, so many postures, so many garbs, that it is not easily apprehended ; sometimes it playeth on words and phrases, taking advantage from the ambiguity of their sense ; sometimes it is wrapped up in a dress of humorous expression ; sometimes it lurketh under an odd similitude ; sometimes it lodgeth in a sly question—in a smart answer—in a quirkish reason—in a shrewd imitation—in a cunningly diverting, or smartly retorting objection ; sometimes it is couched in a bold scheme of speech—in a tart irony—in a stout hyperbole—in a startling metaphor—in a *seemingly plausible objection*, or in acute nonsense ; sometimes it makes a *whimsical representation of sacred persons and things*—a counterfeit speech—a mimical look or jesture ; sometimes an affected simplicity—at other times a presumptuous bluntness *is its true characteristic*, at others, a crafty wresting of obvious matter *to serve its purpose*. Its ways are unaccountable and inexplicable, being answerable to the numberless rovings of fancy and turns of language. It raiseth admiration, as signifying a nimble sagacity of apprehension—a special felicity of invention, a vivacity of spirit, and reach of wit more than vulgar ; it seemeth to argue a rare quickness of parts—a notable skill that can dexterously accommodate itself to the purpose in hand. It possesses a lively briskness of humor which is not apt to damp the sportful flashes of imagination. It also procureth delight by gratifying curiosity with its rareness, or semblance of difficulty, by diverting the mind from its road of serious thought—by instilling gaiety and airiness of spirits—by provoking to

such dispositions of gaiety in a way of emulation or complaisance—and by seasoning matters otherwise distasteful and insipid, with an unusual, and thence grateful savor.”

All this, which was originally said of *wit*, and much more in the same strain, might be said of Infidelity ; for it is well known that *wit*, not *reason*, and *ridicule*, not *wisdom*, are the principal arms of this common enemy of mankind—an enemy found in all ranks of society, not excepting the religious themselves. It is an enemy that speaks all languages, and wears the costume of every age and nation. With the vulgar it can be vulgar, and with the refined, polite ; with the voluptuous it can be voluptuous without scruple ; and with the gay it can be fascinating to excess ; with the man of business it can be economical ; and with the profuse it can be generous to a proverb, and by the substitution of a few fashionable epithets, as nature, for God—chance, for Providence—character and virtue, for religion and piety—and reason, philosophy, and common sense, for divine revelation, it can very easily exclude those solemn verities from the creed of too many in the present day, even in the land where Bible societies and revivals of religion are well known.

The following graphic description of Infidelity is from the pen of Edward Irving, who, whatever may have been his errors in after life, at one time, possessed a power of language, and a vigor of thought, almost bordering on inspiration :—

“ At present, there is a rest, during which the spirit of Infidelity is playing its part most successfully,

and hath obtained the mastery of every thing but the tyrant thrones, and the superstitious altars, for which the terrible contest is about to be holden. The whole science of Europe serveth Infidelity. The whole philosophy of Europe serveth Infidelity—the philosophy of expediency. The whole morality of Europe serveth Infidelity, which is also grounded upon utility. The spirit of freedom and liberty which is smouldering beneath her thrones and governments, ready to toss them on high, and shiver them to atoms, serveth Infidelity, and hath no end but to destroy that which is established. The spirit of the reformed religion over Europe, serveth Infidelity, for it hath set aside the Scriptures, and builds upon the common sense or reason of mankind, and were better to acknowledge Paine's Age of Reason, than the gospel for its standards.

“The spirit of poetry in Germany, where alone any powerful poetry exists, hath bowed to Infidelity, in the two bright and potent stars of Goethe and Schiller; and our Byron is becoming the poetical idol of foreign nations; and all over Europe, from Russia to the isles of Greece; and from the isles of Greece to the rock of Lisbon, our Bentham, the apostle of expediency, hath the upper hand of the lawgivers. And what is left I know not; but that these, the chief and sovereign influencers of the destinies of men, religion, morality, philosophy, science, poetry, and law, that have joined themselves to Infidelity, should dispense and disseminate their proclamations to the body of the people, which now they are doing by the wonderful extension of education, *and professedly liberal principles.*

“The wars and the rumors of wars which were to arise before the end, have come, and lo, they are past; and all Europe is pleasing itself with the imagination of peace. But let every traveller who hath looked into the veins and arteries of the constitution of every kingdom thereof, say whether they are not throbbing with the fever of passion, and every nerve vibrating convulsively under the weight which is oppressing it. And how can it be otherwise in foreign parts, when it is so even among ourselves, that expediency rides the chariot of the Lord in his own realm, so that faith is not regarded, even in our high places, as any thing beyond a word. They positively laugh you to scorn for propounding any other ground or basis of human action, or political government, than utility; and I have lived to hear the statesmen of this Protestant nation declare, in the hearing of those walls where heretofore the religious liberties of the land were established by two centuries of debate, that “there is little or no difference in creeds,” or, in other words, that faith is little more than a name. It is gone forth that “a man is no more answerable for his faith, than for the stature of his person, or the color of his skin.” How then must it be on the continent of Europe, where, in the universities, there is nothing but rationalism in religion, and liberalism in politics; in the Protestant churches, nothing but formality or persecution; where there is no spiritual sentiment but to be laughed at; no spiritual man but to be scorned; and hardly any at all either of spiritual sentiment, or spiritual life, intermingled with the great fermenting mass of feeling?

“ Superstition hath driven Infidelity to its strong hold, which is, diffusion and ramification. And Infidelity hath driven superstition to its strong hold, which is, darkness and force. And the friends of the new power exult on all hands, in the march of mind, in the developement of thought and feeling. But in that developed feeling, there is no faith; in that mighty march of mind there is no religion. It is the natural man, unrestrained of God, fighting against the restraints of man. It is Satan in one form fighting against Satan in another form; it is the devil in his last and worst form, endeavoring to take and hold the earth.”—(*Irving's Babylon and Infidelity foredoomed of God.*)

In the preceding description, the picture may be thought too highly colored, and the censures too sweeping and severe, but when it is considered that in European countries, church and state are blended in an unholy alliance, it will not be wondered at, if, on examination, there be found much of tyranny, hypocrisy, and Infidelity, and very little of genuine faith, sincerity and truth; and of that little we shall find that it exists not in the governments and churches, as such, but in independent societies, and isolated individuals, whose prayers and alms-deeds serve to the purifying and safety of the nations.

But how is it in our own highly favored land, where there is no unholy alliance of church and state, no reigning monarch, nor spiritual domination? Has Infidelity no place here? Alas for us! our free institutions will be found, it is feared, to tempt and invite the monster Infidelity to settle among us, rather than to repel and frown him from

our shores. For is it not a fact, that, among the ten thousand yearly emigrants that find a home and a resting place here, there are Infidels of the very worst stamp—men who styled themselves “free thinkers,” at home, and who, by being proscribed there, have come here as “free inquirers,” with a design to teach us how to think, rather than to profit by our former modes of thinking? Is it not a fact, that the professed disciples and admirers of our immortal Franklin, who, while the constitution was framing, taught our fathers to ask counsel of God in prayer, have prevailed to throw down our State altars, and stifle the voice of prayer in our halls of legislation? And whence this, but to the progress of Infidelity?

It is feared that there is now going on a “foreign conspiracy against our liberties,” and that the introduction of so many Catholics yearly, is dangerous to the safety of the Republic. But wherefore? Are not all good Catholics true believers? Would to God they were! Doubtless it is the Infidelity that is mixed up with Catholicism, or it is that which produced Infidelity, and all its consequences, in France, which is to be dreaded, and which makes the prevalence of Popery so much to be feared.

It is well known that one of the most peaceable and quiet of all religious bodies on earth, has lately experienced one of the most dreadful schisms that ever rent a society. The FRIENDS have divided into Hicksite and Orthodox parties; but wherefore this division among a people who all professed to be led by the infallible spirit of God? Most unquestionably a spirit of Infidelity, in some form or other, was

the cause of this ! “For the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,” and as the reverse of these have appeared among Friends, it is certain that some other spirit than the Spirit of God, has found its way among them, and that spirit, no doubt, is a spirit of Infidelity.

It is well known also, that in the Presbyterian church a fearful division has taken place, accompanied, as all such divisions are, with a sad alienation of affection in the living members of that powerful community ; and it will be well if, in the “New Divinity,” and “New Measures,” as they are called, there be not found, at least, in a qualified sense, something that springs from, or leads to, Infidelity.

And in the great political and party strifes that now agitate the community, it will be well if there be found none of this “leaven of malice and wickedness ;” if the love of party and party measures does not prevail above the love of the truth.

Here is the true *Antichrist*—the enemy of Christ, and the enemy of man—more to be dreaded than the power of either Pagan or Papal Rome. It is one of those “unclean spirits like frogs” which St. John saw in vision, that came “out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.” (Rev. xvi. 13.) This description is remarkable, and answers well to the spirit of Infidelity, which, like a frog, being an amphibious animal, can live in different elements ; so this can live as well in church as state, on land as on the water, among the ignorant and vulgar as

among the refined and learned. Like those noisy, impudent, and disagreeable animals, this evil spirit is loquacious, bold, and offensive, and often as troublesome as the plague of frogs in Egypt. This is that seed of the serpent that lives through all generations ; it is the root of the carnal mind which is enmity against God. It is an evil influence, which, every where, except in heaven,

“Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
Spreads undivided, operates unspent.”

To check the growth of this noxious weed—to repulse this common enemy, these lectures were first written, then read, and are now published. Of their merits the reader must judge.

LECTURE I.

ON THE PENTATEUCH.*

"I will show thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth."—Dan. x. 21.

THE Pentateuch, or five books of Moses, whether inspired or not, is certainly a most wonderful production. No other writings with which we are acquainted, claim so high an antiquity as these. No other books contain so great a variety within so small a compass. Here we have history the most ancient, narrative the most interesting, biography the most entertaining, poetry the most sublime, prophecies the most veritable, precepts the most just, events the most astonishing, circumstances related and characters described, the most remarkable in the world.

Who can peruse the records of the world before the flood—of the patriarchal age—of the life and times of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—of Joseph and his brethren—of the sojourning of the children of

* The word Pentateuch is a name derived from two Greek words, ΠΕΝΤΕ (Pente) five ; and ΤΕΥΧΟΣ (Teukos,) books, and signifies "five books." This is the reason these books are called the Pentateuch.

Israel in Egypt, and of the travels of Israel in the wilderness—of the miracles of Moses—of the giving of the law, and of the whole history of the Jews until the death of their great lawgiver, without becoming wiser, if not better ?

Some account of these books may now be interesting and profitable to us ; for, on the supposition that God has spoken to us in these venerable writings, we cannot but feel interested to know on what subjects he has been pleased to reveal his mind. The book of Genesis gives an account of the creation of all things,—the institution of the Sabbath—the history of Adam and Eve, and of their shameful fall—the history of the antediluvians, and of Noah's flood, and of the moral state of the world at that period—God's covenant with Noah, the second representative of all mankind—Noah's prophecies—the confusion of tongues—the dispersion of mankind, and founding of empires—the histories of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and his brethren—Jacob's prophecies concerning the twelve patriarchs—the death of Jacob, and of Joseph, and of that generation.

This book is called GENESIS, because, as that word imports, it contains an account of the production or generation of all things. It embraces the history of a period of about 2,369 years. It contains, also, some direct prophecies concerning Christ, and other predictions which have since been fulfilled, and are still fulfilling. It is the oldest record in the world, and contains a clear, though short history of those remote ages which profane authors have vainly endeavored to rescue from oblivion.

This book was received by the Jews with the full conviction of its truth, on the authority of that inspiration under which Moses was known to act. But when the book was first delivered, many persons then living, must have been competent to decide on the fidelity with which he relates those events which were subsequent to the creation ; for the longevity of man, in the earlier ages of the world, rendered tradition the criterion of truth ; and the tradition was conveyed from Adam to Moses, through only seven intermediate persons. The Israelites, therefore, must have been well able to judge how far these records were consistent with truth. If the memory of man reached beyond the period assigned to the creation, they must have rejected the Mosaic history ; but if, through so small a number of immediate predecessors, they could trace up the origin of man to Adam, we need not wonder at the implicit veneration which ratified the records of Moses.

The sacred authority of this book is established also by the internal evidence of its inspiration, and by the suffrages of our Saviour and his apostles, who have cited largely from it ; by the practices of living Jews ; by the testimony of heathen authors, and by the impossibility of a forgery at any period subsequent to the time of Moses.

The book of *Exodus* contains a history of the Israelites, from the death of Joseph to the erection of the tabernacle in the wilderness, including a period of about 145 years. It records the cruel persecution and oppression of the Israelites in Egypt, under the Pharaohs ; the birth, exposure, and preser-

vation of Moses ; his flight into Midian ; his call and mission to Pharaoh ; the miracles performed by him and Aaron ; the ten plagues, in which the supreme power of Jehovah was shown, in striking contrast, with the absolute weakness and contemptible meanness of the gods of Egypt.

The name of this book signifies “going out ;” and the manner in which the Israelites “went out,” is particularly described ; as also their passage through the Red sea ; the destruction of the Egyptian army ; Israel’s triumph, travels, idolatry, and punishment ; the giving of the law on Sinai, and the institution of that form of worship which prevailed among the Jews until the time of Christ.

The circumstances attending the plagues inflicted upon the Egyptians, which are recorded in this book, are fully treated upon by Mr. Bryant, in his learned treatise upon this subject, from which the following particulars are extracted by Mr. Horne :—

“As many of the Israelites were followers of the idolatry that surrounded them, these miracles were admirably adapted to display the vanity of the idols and false gods adored by their oppressors, the proud and learned Egyptians.

1. By the plague of *water turned into blood*, was demonstrated the superiority of Jehovah over their imaginary gods. The Nile was religiously honored by the Egyptians ; they valued it much upon the excellence of its waters, and esteemed all the natives of the river as in some degree sacred. When, therefore, the Nile was turned into *blood*, how must these idolaters have abhorred that which had so long been the object of their reverence.

2. In the plague of *frogs*, the object of their idolatrous worship, the Nile, was made an instrument of their punishment. Frogs were esteemed sacred by the Egyptians, but now they are their annoyance, and the waters of their sacred river become a second time polluted, and the land is equally defiled.

3. The plague of *lice* reproved their superstition ; they thought it would be a great profanation of their temples if they entered into them with any animalcula of this sort upon them. The priests never wore woollen garments, but only linen,* because that is least apt to produce lice. The judgment inflicted by Moses in this plague, was so proper, that the priests and magicians immediately perceived from whose hand it came, and confessed that it was the *finger of God*.

4. The plague of *flies*, which was inflicted in the midst of winter, and not in summer, when Egypt swarmed with flies, would show the Egyptians the folly of the god they worshipped, who was supposed to have power to drive them away in summer, but could not now prevent their coming in winter.

5. The plague of *murrain*, (a contagious disease among cattle,) destroyed the living objects of their stupid worship. The sacred bull, the cow, or heifer, the ram, and the he-goat, fell down dead before their worshippers. In this the Egyptians not only suffered loss, but beheld their deities sink before the God of the Hebrews.

6. As the Egyptians were celebrated for their

* How often do we read of the "*fine linen*" of Egypt, in many parts of Scripture !

medical skill, (of which the art of embalming dead bodies is still a proof,) and their physicians were held in the highest repute, the infliction of *boils and blains*, (boils that bred worms and burst,) which neither the deities could avert, nor the art of man alleviate, would farther show the vanity of their gods. The Egyptians had long been in the practice of sacrificing human victims, by burning them on a high altar, and at the close of the sacrifice, taking their ashes and scattering them in the air, for the good of the people. Now Moses and Aaron take ashes from the furnace, and scatter them abroad, but with a different intention, and to a more certain effect.

7. The plague of *rain, hail, and fire*, demonstrated that neither their god Osiris, who presided over fire, nor Isis, who presided over water, could protect the "fields of Zoan" from the rain, hail, and lightning of Jehovah.

8. The devastation produced by the plague of *locusts*, must have convinced these idolaters that the gods in whom they trusted could not deliver them from the power of the God of the Hebrews. They trusted much to the fruitfulness of their soil, and to their deities Isis and Serapis, who were the conservators of all plenty. But, by this judgment, they were taught that it was impossible to stand before Moses, the servant of the true God. The very winds which they venerated, were made the instruments of their destruction; and the sea, which they regarded as their defence against locusts, could not afford them any protection.

9. The plague of *darkness*, would confirm the

Egyptians still more, if confirmation were necessary, in the belief of the impotency of their gods. They considered light, and fire, the purest of elements, to be proper types of God. They regarded the sun as an emblem of his glory, and the soul of the world, and considered the sun and moon as the Creators, conservators, and rulers of all things.

10. The destruction of the *first-born*, was a just retribution ; for after the Egyptians had been preserved by one of the Israelitish family, they had, contrary to all right, enslaved the people to whom they were so much indebted ; had murdered their children, and made their bondage intolerable." The book of Exodus presents us with several types of Christ, such as *Moses, Aaron, the Paschal Lamb, the Rock in Horeb, the Mercy Seat, &c.*

The next book is called **LEVITICUS**, because it treats of the laws, ordinances, and offices of the Levitical priesthood. This book throws considerable light upon many passages of the New Testament, which would be quite unintelligible without it ; and the Epistle to the Hebrews, in return, is the best comment on this book. The things herein described, are shadows of better things to come, even of Christ, and of redemption through him. The Old Testament gospel is well expressed in the following lines, by Cowper :—

Israel in ancient days,
Not only had a view
Of Sinai in a blaze,
But learned the gospel too.
The types and figures were a glass,
In which they saw a Saviour's face.

The paschal sacrifice,
And blood-besprinkled door,
Seen with enlightened eyes,
And once applied with power,
Would teach the need of other blood
To reconcile the world to God.

The Lamb, the dove, set forth
His perfect innocence,
Whose blood of matchless worth,
Should be the soul's defence ;
For he who would for sin atone,
Must have no failings of his own.

The scape-goat on his head
The people's trespass bore,
And to the desert led,
Was to be seen no more ,
In him our surety seem'd to say
Behold, I bear your sins away.

Dipt in his fellow's blood,
The living bird went free,
The type well understood,
Expressed the sinner's plea,
Describ'd a guilty soul enlarg'd,
And by a Saviour's death discharg'd.

Jesus, I love to trace,
Throughout the sacred page,
The footsteps of thy grace,
The same in every age :
O grant that I may faithful be,
To clearer light vouchsafed to me !"

Whoever attentively examines the *ceremonial laws* of Moses, will see, if not feel, the justice of the following remarks :—

“If Moses was not divinely commissioned, at what time, and on what pretence could the whole nation be persuaded to receive the *laws*, and abide by the *regulations* said to have been delivered by him?” (*Levi's Answer to Paine.*)

“How came it to pass, that, in all the divisions and factions into which the nation fell, there was never any Jew who endeavored, with any success, to undeceive the rest of his own people, so as to make them shake off the troublesome yoke of Moses' laws? They were received by the whole nation, a whole tribe was set apart to explain and execute them; they were publicly read every Sabbath, and in a more solemn manner every seventh year, and public festivals were kept, in view of them, every year, until the time of Christ.”—(*Allix's Reflections.*)

“No power or art of man could have obliged so great and turbulent a nation to submit to such troublesome precepts as the Jews always have submitted to, had they not been fully convinced, from the very first, that the command was from God, and that it must be obeyed, at the peril of their souls.”—(*Bishop Wilson.*)

The book of NUMBERS is so called, because it contains an account of the “numbering” of the people in their journeyings through the wilderness to the promised land. It includes a period of about 38 years, and may be considered as the first journal, or book of travels ever written. In this book is contained the singular narrative of that most inexplicable character called *Balaam*, and of his interview with *Balak*, king of Moab. Of Balaam, a very acute observer

of human nature has remarked :—" He was a man of very extraordinary character, and of very singular gifts and abilities. He seems to have united qualities the most dissimilar and opposite. He exhibits in his language and conduct, a very uncommon combination and contrast of virtues and vices. What can exceed, on the one hand, the generosity and disinterestedness which he expressed when repeatedly solicited to employ his prophetic sagacity against Israel ? What can equal, on the other, the vile prostitution, for hire, of his great talents in the service of an idolatrous prince, against the people whom he knew to be favored, and protected of heaven ? We see him one day seeking the most intimate communion with God, and the next recurring to the practice of infamous arts, to accomplish a most diabolical purpose ; proclaiming, at one time, in the language of prophecy, the security, glory, and happiness of God's people ; and at another, in the language of a wicked policy, insidiously giving counsels which directly tended to tarnish that glory and destroy that happiness and security. We behold him, at one time, fully impressed with the importance of a holy life, and even praying that he might die the death of the righteous, and at another, cleaving to the mammon of unrighteousness, and at last, prematurely cut off among the enemies of the Lord." (*Dr. Hunter.*)

Scarcely any piece of history, (says Dr. Clarke,) is better calculated to impress the mind of a serious reader with a sense of the goodness and severity of God, than the book of Numbers. In every transaction, the holiness and justice of God appear, in the

closest connection with his benevolence and mercy. From such a Being as this book describes, what have not the wicked to fear ! From such a Father and friend, what have the righteous not to hope ! It is of the things recorded in this book, that St. Paul says, " They happened unto them for ensamples, and are written for our admonition." From Christ's remarks to Nicodemus, concerning the brazen "serpent" which Moses "lifted up," we may gather that this book was esteemed as canonical among the Jews in his time, and therefore we have no just grounds, at this day, to doubt its authenticity.

The last of the five books of Moses is called **DEUTERONOMY**, which signifies "the second law," or "law repeated." This book contains a compendious recapitulation of the laws given by Moses, enlarged, with many explanations, and enforced by the strongest and most pathetic exhortations to obedience. This was intended for the benefit of those who were born in the wilderness, who were not present at the giving of the law at Sinai. The inspired legislator who, in the preceding books, had spoken of himself in the third person, here changes his style, and, dropping the character of an historian, in the most earnest and impressive manner, addresses himself to his people. The variations in expression, which are observable in the repetition of the law, have been considered as an intimation that the spirit of the law, rather than the letter, is that which is to be regarded.

As the Israelites were now about to enter the promised land, and many of them had not witnessed the various transactions in the wilderness, Moses reca-

pitulates the principal occurrences of the forty years, now almost elapsed, and show the necessity of fearing, loving, and obeying God ; repeats the moral, ceremonial, and judicial law, and confirms the whole in the most solemn manner ; appoints Joshua as his successor ; delivers a copy of the law to the priests ; prophecies of things which should come to pass in the latter days ; blesses each of the tribes prophetically ; and then, having taken a view of the promised land from the top of Mount Nebo, yields up the ghost, and is buried by the Lord. This instructive book of practical directions, many of which are applicable to us, as well as to ancient Israel, is worthy of our most diligent perusal.

We will now enter more particularly upon the question of the divine authority and inspiration of these books.

That Moses was the author of the Pentateuch, is proved by the concurrent testimony of antiquity, and the uniform report of uninterrupted traditions.

Whoever is in the least acquainted with the names of heathen deities, heroes, heroines, and other fabulous persons, will perceive that there is some foundation for the truth of the things related in these books. “ At least, it must be granted, that these matters have given occasion to most of their fables, as to that of Chaos ; to that of the marriage of Peleus and Thetis ; to that of Prometheus and Pandora’s box ; to that of Jupiter’s laughter for the first seven days of his life ; to that of the golden age, and of the deluge ; to the name of Deucalion ; to that of firing the world by Phæton ; and to a great many other fictions, which seem to be nothing less than

caricatures of the persons and things mentioned in the first books of the Bible."

Again, whoever is acquainted with ancient history will admit that the heathens themselves have acknowledged Moses for the most ancient lawgiver ; for this we have the testimony of *Plato*, a Greek philosopher, who died at Athens 348 B. C. ; *Polemus*, or *Polemon*, another Greek philosopher, who died 270 B. C. ; *Pythagorus*, another Grecian, who died 497 B. C. ; and *Diodorus Siculus*, an eminent ancient historian, of Sicily, who places Moses in the front of the most ancient lawgivers.

The objections that have been urged against this, (the fact that Moses is the author of these books) are so trivial as scarcely to deserve notice. Many persons cannot comprehend how Moses could be the author of that part which relates to his own death ; and, forgetting that Joshua or Ezra might have supplied those few verses, make their objections against the authenticity of the whole.

It is worthy of notice, that in many parts of the Pentateuch, Moses speaks of himself as its author. It is mentioned also as the work of Moses, under the title of " the Law," by almost all the sacred writers, and is cited indisputably as his work, and was received by every sect of the Jewish church, as also by the Samaritans, after the revolt of the ten tribes. That the Pentateuch was written before the Babylonish captivity, is evident, both from the book of Daniel, and from the Chaldee paraphrases so often mentioned by biblical critics.

As a further proof that these books were written by Moses, it may be observed that they are address-

ed to the Israelites, as his cotemporaries, and they never afterwards could have been imposed as a genuine work, upon his countrymen, whose religion and government were built upon them.

It is no small service that is rendered to the cause of Christianity, that it constantly appeals to *facts* that were well known at the time the doctrine or precept was first promulgated, and if it be a fact that there were such men as Cyrus, and Alexander, and Cesar, and we believe, on the credit of general history, that there were such men, why should we doubt the fact of there being such a man as Moses ; and moreover, if no one ever doubted the authenticity of the works of Homer, Virgil, or Cesar, why should any man doubt the authenticity of the writings of the Jewish lawgiver. Is it not strange that men should give credit to every line of Homer, and doubt every statement of Moses ?

“ A fact is accounted certain when it is attested by those who were eye witnesses of it ; when recorded by an historian who had lived among those who had perfect knowledge of it ; when it is not gainsayed or contradicted by any ; if penned at the time, when it could be related otherwise, without exposing the writer to derision ; when the matter is found to be of that nature that none could be ignorant of it ; or lastly, because of its natural connection with all those other events which necessarily depend upon it.”

“ To speak plainly, is it not very unreasonable and unjust to demand either more proofs, or such as are of another nature, for the confirmation of the truth in question, than are required to verify any other

matters of fact. Why should not the testimony of Noah's children be sufficient to prove that there was such a man as Methuselah? Or why should not the testimony of Methuselah be sufficient to prove that there was such a man as Adam? Do we not every day give credit to the accounts which old men give us of their predecessors, especially when we find that what they relate hath an exact reference and connection with those things we are eye witnesses of?"

The books of Moses cannot have been forged since the time of Josephus, who testifies, (in his work against Apion, Book I. Sect. 8,) "We have not an innumerable multitude of books among us, disagreeing and contradicting one another, as the Greeks have, but only twenty-two books, which are justly believed to be divine. *And of them five belong to Moses, which contain his laws, and the traditions of the origin of mankind till his death.*"

"It is ridiculous to suppose that they were forged since the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus, for they have been in the hands of the heathen themselves ever since that time."

"It is equally inconsistent to suppose them forged since the revolt of the ten tribes, because we find the books of Moses among the Samaritans, who have preserved them ever since their revolt, without any changes, but such as are incident to all manuscripts passing through many hands."

"It is no less absurd to suppose them forged at any other time. Nothing could be more notorious than the fact, that the Jews read the law of Moses every Sabbath day in all their families, or synagogues, and every seventh year beside, and that they

kept the three solemn feasts, of the Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles, every year. Nothing could be more apparent than whether the Jews did obey the laws contained in these books or not. Nothing can be more absurd than to suppose an insensible change wrought either in the form of their civil government, or the ceremonies of their religion."

"Let us imagine a man endeavoring, all of a sudden, to introduce into the world a new system of religion; burdensome, expensive, obscure, and differing, in almost every particular, from that of his ancestors, as also from that of surrounding nations, without any authority from God, would not the people be ready to say, as the Pharisees said to Christ, "Master, we would see a sign from heaven—what sign showest thou? By what authority doest thou these things?" For any one, therefore, at any period of the Jewish history, to forge such a book as the Pentateuch, under the name of Moses, and impose it upon the people as his work, when he had written no such book, would have exposed the impostor to the most perfect contempt.

"Furthermore, if, when the Lacedemonians tell us of the laws of their *Lycurgus*, and the Athenians of those of their *Solon*, and the Romans of those of their *Numa*, we think ourselves obliged to believe them, because every nation is supposed to be a faithful depository of the laws of him who first founded their government, and if we doubt not in the least the truth of these relations, though there be no people at this day, who live according to the laws of *Lycurgus*, or *Solon*, or *Numa*, can any valuable reason be imagined, for us to doubt whether Moses

wrote the book of Genesis, when an entire nation have constantly averred that he did so? Nay, when all the Jews, who continue at this day, do, in all places, where they are scattered throughout the world, equally, and with one consent, maintain that they received this book from him, together with the laws and worship therein contained, and when it is notorious that many of them have suffered martyrdom in confirmation of this truth?"—*Allix's Reflections on the books of Scripture.*

"The Jews compute the beginning of their day from the preceding evening—they keep the Sabbath on the seventh day—they observe circumcision—they abstain from eating the muscle which is in the hollow of the thigh. The occasion and ground of all which, though they be commanded in other books of scripture, is no where to be found but in the book of Genesis, to which all these laws have a natural relation."

"Now let us suppose that Solomon had formed a design of deceiving the people, in publishing the Pentateuch for a work of Moses; is it possible he should so far impose on his people, as to make them receive the said book all at once, *as that which had been constantly read in their families* every seventh day, and every seventh year, for six hundred years before his time, and therefore, as a book had been so long in all their families, though indeed it was never heard of by them before that time."

"If an impostor can create a belief in others, that he hath some secret communication with the Deity, those who are thus persuaded by him, will

easily submit themselves to his laws ; but it is absolutely impossible that a whole people should all at once forget what they have heard and learned of their parents and forefathers, and instead thereof admit of idle tales forged at pleasure.”—*Allix*.

The truth of the last remark has been proved in this country, within the memory of persons now living. Some years since, a certain writer, more famous for ridicule, filthy talking, and jesting, than for “reason and common sense,” tried to make the people believe that the books of the Old Testament were the product of a “gloomy Monk, by whom, it is not improbable, (says he,) they were written.” But though he tried to filch from his fellow men their only hope of heaven, he could not succeed ; for, as the sequel proves, they had their *hours*, if not their “*Age of Reason* ;” and in those hours of cool and calm reflection, they found that the testimony of all ages and all history respecting the truth of Scripture, was not to be invalidated by the *ipse dixit* of a petulant cynic.

It has also been proved in times still later. Even in our own age, which I am afraid is not an age of reason with every one, false prophets have risen up and tried to make the people believe that they were some great ones. Some have pretended that they had found the book of *Jasher*. Others, that they could work miracles, or that Christ was going to make his appearance in *them*, or that they had found out, by immediate revelation from God, that the Bible was not *all* true. But blessed be the rock of our salvation ; “we have a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto we do well to take heed as unto a

light shining in a dark place until the day dawn and the day star arise in our hearts."

But some there are, who, though they cannot disprove that Moses was the author of the books that go by his name, yet affect to disbelieve the truth of many of the things which he relates. And others seem at a loss to determine how he could come at the certain knowledge of those facts which were so remote from his time. For the satisfaction of sincere inquirers, let it be remembered that the patriarchs, from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, did keep the seventh day as a sabbath, holy unto the Lord, of which there is sufficient evidence in the fact that there is such frequent allusion to this division of time in many places of the book of Genesis, and the beginning of Exodus. When the ark was finished, "it came to pass after *seven days*, that the flood was upon the earth." And when the ark had rested on the top of the mountain, Noah sent forth a dove, and "after *seven days* sent her forth again." So when Laban had given his daughter Leah, instead of Rachel, to Jacob, and Jacob was dissatisfied, he said, "Fulfil her *week*, and we will give thee this also." This period was the usual time allotted for nuptial rejoicings, and for funeral solemnities. The feast of Vashti lasted *seven days*, and Joseph and the Egyptians mourned *seven days* at the interment of Jacob in the land of Canaan. It appears also from Exod. vii. 25, that God observed *seven days* after he had smote the river to change the waters into blood. It is evident from Exodus 16th chapter, that the keeping of the Sabbath was observed by the Israelites before the law was given at Sinai. The words of the

decatalogue also intimate that the institution of the Sabbath was not a new thing in Israel. The *fourth* precept is introduced by the word "*remember*," which is not the case with any of the others. Several heathen writers, among whom are Homer, Hesiod and Linus, mention the seventh day as a festival and solemn day, because all things were finished within six days."—(*Allix.*)

"In confirmation that all men have been derived from one family, let it be observed, that there are many customs and usages, both sacred and civil, which have prevailed in all parts of the world, which could owe their origin to nothing but a general institution, which could never have existed, had not mankind been of the same blood originally, and instructed in the same common notions before they were dispersed. Among these usages may be reckoned,—1. The numbering by *tens*.—2. Their computing time by a cycle of *seven* days.—3. Their setting apart the *seventh* day for religious purposes.—4. Their use of sacrifices, propitiatory and eucharistical.—5. The consecration of temples and altars.—6.—The institution of sanctuaries or places of refuge, and their privileges.—7. Their giving a *tenth* for the use of the altar.—8. The custom of worshipping the Deity *barefooted*.—9. Abstinence previous to their offering sacrifices.—10. The order of the priesthood, and its support.—11. The notion of legal pollutions.—12. The universal tradition of a general deluge.—13. The universal opinion that the *rainbow* was a divine sign.—14. And the *olive branch* a token of peace."—(*Clarke.*)

The truth of the things related by Moses, might,

as we have already seen, be very easily preserved by uninterrupted tradition. The patriarchs were remarkable for their longevity, and in the absence of *books*, and that infinite variety of *news*, which are in circulation at the present day, would be more likely to *talk over*, again and again, in the course of eight or nine hundred years, all the remarkable things that happened when they were young; and as there was but one Adam and Eve, and one Cain and Abel, &c., it was not possible for these things to be forgotten. Adam could relate them to Methuselah, with whom whom he was cotemporary 240 years; and Methusaleh to Noah, with whom he was cotemporary 600 years; Noah might have related them to Shem, and Shem to Abraham; Abraham to Isaac, Isaac to Joseph, Joseph to Amram, and Amram to Moses.

In these books of Moses, we have what may very properly be termed an *impartial* history. Histories written in the present day, and especially *ecclesiastical histories*, are famous for the reverse. In these merely human compilations, the writers generally take care to exalt their own nation, family, or sect, and to lower those of their rivals. But in the Mosaic history, the author honestly relates all the times, circumstances, places, persons, and actions, favorable or unfavorable, no matter, if necessary to the perfection of the narrative. "There are many passages in them which any person who lived after Moses' time, would certainly have left out, if for no other reason, for this, at least, the mention of them was highly derogatory to some of the first families in Israel. Most men are careful to conceal what-

ever is dishonorable to their families. Moses, on the contrary, records things prejudicial to the memory of his ancestors, and derogatory to his own. When he speaks of Levi, the head and father of his own tribe, he leaves an eternal blot upon his memory; and when he speaks of himself, he lays open his own failings and sins, and leaves himself at last "in the plains of Moab," in view of the promised land, but not permitted to enter therein. Such sincerity and impartiality mightily increase the authority of an author."—(*Allix*.)

"The *miracles* of Moses have *four* marks of authenticity peculiar to them, which evidently demonstrate their divine origin. 1, They were the objects of *sense*, that is, perceptible to the senses,—2, They were performed in the most public manner, in the presence of millions of people,—3, A great part of the ceremonial law is founded on them,—4, A great part of the precepts took place from the time of their being performed, and have continued the same to this very day—the miracle of the *man-na*, which continued nearly 40 years—the *plenty*, in the 6th and 49th years—and the fact that no enemy should desire to make inroads upon their territories at the time of the three great festivals, when the men of war were gone up to Jerusalem, are strong proofs of the divine origin of our religion."—(*Levi's Answer to Paine*.)

The memory of the miracle of Israel's deliverance from Egypt, and of the death of Egypt's first-born, is perpetuated to the present day, in the feast of the passover, among the Jews. And the fact, that the people are a separate, distinct, and peculiar people,

unmixed and alone, though scattered among all the nations of the civilized earth, is a proof that they are the chosen people of God, and that Moses was their law giver, their sacred historian, and their heaven-inspired prophet.

“The *laws* of Moses respecting the poor, the widow and fatherless, hired servants, purchased servants, and slaves, are vastly superior to those of ancient Greece, Sparta, and Rome; or even of those *Christian States* who still continue to make void the law of God by their political traditions. “It makes one tremble,” says Montsequieu, “to read over the Roman laws respecting slaves. They compare them to the beasts of burden, and give them up to the most cruel torture. Did the master of a family happen to be assassinated, all those under the same roof were condemned to die, without distinction. What could unfortunate slaves do, against voluptuous and imperious masters, who were restrained by no laws?” Excesses of incontinence are attested by the same writer. “Even Cato, the wise Cato, carried on a scandalous trade with his beautiful slaves.”

At Lacedemon, let the slaves be treated in the cruelest manner soever, yet they could claim no protection from the laws. If any one looked above his condition, he was condemned to die, and his master was fined. The Spartans, being authorized by such laws, used to fall upon the Helots (slaves) whilst they were at work in the fields, and without mercy would destroy the ablest among them; and this for mere exercise, and lest the slaves should increase too much.

And Rome, still more barbarous, calmly viewed her great men slaughter their slaves, without the least cause of complaint, in order to throw their bodies into their fish ponds, to make their lampreys, by such nourishment, more delicious. And in the amphitheatre, and on festival days, they caused more blood to flow than in many days of battle. Our code of laws is short and clear ; kings can read it and nations understand it ; whilst the laws of some of the most refined civilized nations, after many hundred years' labor, are scarcely any thing more than undigested compilations—confused heaps of foreign, oppressive laws, and barbarous customs—dark labyrinths, in which the most learned counselors lose their way, and through which the greatest lawyers can scarcely show a path ; for what is law to-day is not allowed to be law to-morrow.

It must farther be observed, that all the tribes in the whole nation were governed by the same laws and statutes ! But in many nations and governments, every town and every hamlet has its own laws. What is just (in the eye of the law,) in one village, is unjust, two miles farther off ; and they change laws as often as they change post horses.

Our laws are uniform and invariable ; they are the same to-day, and are known to every Jew ; while those of Lycurgus, in about five centuries after they were made, were all forgotten. The *morality* of the laws of Moses is manifest to all who will be at the pains to consult them. There is scarcely a vice which they do not condemn. It is not enough that evil actions are forbidden ; evil desires are prohibited. “ Neither shalt thou *desire*

thy neighbor's wife—neither shalt thou *covet* thy neighbor's house." (Deut. v. 21.)

"The *philosophy* of Moses is not that barren and fruitless one whose subtilty evaporates in empty reasonings, and whose powers spend themselves in discoveries of no use to the happiness of men ; *it is not that disastrous philosophy which, with an axe in its hand, and a veil over its eyes, throws down, overturns, and destroys every thing, and builds up nothing—*which, in its impious phrenzy, makes matter its God, and which distinguishes a man from a beast only by his shape! No, it is the wise philosophy of a good man who wishes to render his fellow creatures happy."—(*Levi.*)

The proofs of the *divine origin* and *inspiration* of these books are now brought within a very small compass. "It is sufficient to establish, in the mind of every Christian, not only the authenticity of these books as the work of Moses, but also their claim to a divine origin, that the words and laws of Moses are cited by the sacred writers, as the words and laws of God. They were likewise appealed to by our Saviour and his apostles, as the work of an inspired prophet ; and Christ solemnly confirmed every jot and tittle of the law, and bore testimony to the infallible accomplishment of its designs and promises."

"These books were, immediately after their composition, deposited in the tabernacle, (Deut. xxxi. 9, 26,) and thence transferred to the temple, where they were preserved with the most vigilant care. *The Jews maintained that God had more care of the letters and syllables of the law, than of the stars*

of heaven ; hence every letter was numbered, and notice was taken how often it occurred. Josephus in his work against Apion, (Book 1st, sec. 8,) maintains that, ‘during so many ages as have already passed, no one hath been so bold as either to add any thing to them, to take any thing from them, or make any change in them.’ In addition to this, the Jewish literati, the Mavorites, or Mazorettes, ascertained the exact number of the verses, words, and letters of all the books of the Old Testament, and of each book, and of every section in each book, and of all its subdivisions, and made critical remarks upon the verses, words, and letters of the Hebrew text. So fully satisfied were the Israelites of the truth of the things taught by Moses, that they adopted his laws, made them the basis of their religion, and incorporated them into the very frame of their government.”—(*Critica Biblica*, volume I.)

The *predictions* contained in the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy, were there no other in the writings of Moses, compared with the past and present condition of the Jews, afford an irrefragable and everlasting proof of the justness of his claims to *divine inspiration*. The prophet, in the 25th verse, foretels their dispersion ; and the proof of the truth of the prediction lies in the fact that many of the Jews were taken captive by the Assyrians, the Chaldeans, the Persians, and the Romans ; and that many of them are found at this day in all the four quarters of the earth. In the 29th verse he says, “thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore ;” and it is well known that almost all governments have taxed or fined them

in one way or other, to get their money. Henry III. of England, always taxed them at every low ebb of his fortune. One, named Abraham, paid him, at one time, five hundred pounds sterling. Another, whose name was Aaron, paid him, at different ^{times} times, no less than twenty thousand pounds, and his son, Edward I. having appointed a commission to inquire into crimes of all kinds, and the adulteration of the coin of the realm being imputed chiefly to the Jews, he let loose on them the whole rigor of his laws. In London alone, two hundred and eighty of them were hanged at once, for this crime; and fifteen thousand of them were robbed of their effects, and banished the kingdom.

In the 32d verse, Moses says, "Thy sons and thy daughters shall be given unto another people, and thine eyes shall look and fail with longing for them all the day long;" and in Spain and Portugal, the children of the Jews have been taken from them by order of the government, to be educated in the Popish religion. The fourth council of Toledo ordered that their children should be taken from them, for fear they should partake of their errors; and that they should be shut up in monasteries, to be instructed in the truths of Christianity; and when the Jews were banished from Portugal, the king ordered that all under fourteen years of age should be taken from their parents.

In the 34th verse, the prophet says, "Thou shalt be mad for the sight of thine eyes, which thou shalt see." After the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, some of the Jews who took refuge in the castle of Mada-sa, where, being closely besieged by the Romans,

they first murdered their wives and children, and then one another. And a similar event happened at the castle of York, in England, in the reign of Richard I., where five hundred of them, after murdering their wives and children, set fire to the building and perished in the flames.

It was predicted by Moses, that the Jews should be sorely distressed by war and famine, and the want of all things, and that they should “eat their own children secretly, in their distress, because of the straitness of the siege.” This remarkable prophecy was twice fulfilled—once at the siege of Samaria, in the time of Elisha, and the other during the siege of Jerusalem, by the Romans, of which Josephus gives the following afflicting account:—

“During the siege, there was a most terrible famine in the city, at which time, there was a certain woman, of a noble family, driven to distraction, by famine, boiled her own child, and when she had eaten half, covered up the rest, and kept it for another time.”

The remarks of Dr. Clarke, at the close of this prophecy, are so pointed, and so pertinent, though brief, that I think them very suitable wherewith to close this lecture.

“This is an astonishing chapter; in it are prophecies delivered more than three thousand years ago, and now fulfilling! O God! how immense is thy wisdom; and how profound thy counsels! To thee alone are known all thy works, from the beginning to the end. What an irrefragable proof does this chapter afford, of the truth and divine origin of the Pentateuch!”

LECTURE II.

ON THE HISTORICAL BOOKS.

“If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.”
—Luke xvi. 31.

THE historical books of the Old Testament, form a part of those Scriptures which were “given by inspiration of God,” and are, therefore, free from error, and to be resorted to “for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness.” The writers of these books every where display such an acquaintance with the counsels and designs of God, as could not have been obtained by mere human foresight or penetration; while the numerous predictions which they have recorded, and above all, the testimony of Christ and of his apostles, fully confirm their claims to inspiration.

It is evident, from an examination of the historical books, that they are collections from the authentic records of the Jewish nation. We have also the testimony of Josephus to this effect.—(*Contra Apion, lib. 1.*)

These collections, though generally made while the events were fresh in memory, and by persons who were cotemporary with the periods to which they severally relate, appear to have been thrown into the present form, and to have received some additions, at a much later period. Hence, the days when the transactions took place are sometimes spoken of as being long since past, and things are frequently mentioned as “remaining to *this day*.” (Josh. iv. 9 ; v. 9 ; vii. 26 ; viii. 29 ; x. 27 ; Judg. i. 21, 26 ; xv. 19 ; xviii. 12 ; 1 Sam. vi. 18 ; ix. 9 ; xxvii. 6 ; 2 Kings, xiv. 7 ; xvii. 41.)

“While the twelve tribes were united under one government, their history is represented in one general point of view. When a separation took place, the kingdom of Judah, from which tribe the Messiah was to descend, was the chief object of attention with the sacred historians ; they, however, occasionally treat of the events that occurred in Samaria, especially when connected with the concerns of Judah. It should be remarked that the sacred writers, in chronological accounts, frequently calculated in round numbers, where accuracy was not of any consequence. They likewise assumed various epochs. Thus in Genesis, Moses reckoned only by the ages of the patriarchs. In Exodus, he, as succeeding prophets, dated from the departure from Egypt ; and others, who lived in later times, from the building of the temple ; from the reigns of their several kings ; from their captivities and deliverances, and other important national events ; or, lastly, from the reigns of foreign kings, whom, if they described by names different from those under which they are

mentioned in profane history, it was in accommodation to the titles by which they were known to the Jews." (See Dan. i. 7.)

The difficulties that occur on a superficial perusal of the scriptures chiefly originate in a want of attention to these considerations; and they who have not the leisure and industry which are necessary to elucidate such particulars, will do well to consult some able commentator, or spend their time in collecting the obvious instruction which is richly spread through every page of the sacred volume, rather than to engage in profitless speculations, or entangle themselves in objections which result from ignorance.

The historical, like all the other parts of scripture, have every mark of genuine and unsophisticated truth. Many relations are interwoven with accounts of other nations, now entirely extinct, yet no inconsistencies have been detected. A connected and dependent chain of history, a uniform and pervading spirit of piety, and co-operating designs, invariably prevail in every part of the sacred books; and the historical, unfold the accomplishment of the prophetic parts."—(*Grey's Key*.)

THE BOOK OF JOSHUA.

This book is the first in order of those generally termed historical. The whole of the Jewish and Christian churches, with the exception of a few individuals, have uniformly acknowledged it to be the work of Joshua, the servant of Moses, in support of

which, the following reasons offer themselves to our consideration.

“ 1. It is well known that Moses kept an accurate register of all the events that took place during his administration in the wilderness ; at least, from the giving of the law till the time of his death. Now, it is not likely that Joshua, the constant companion and servant of Moses, could see all this, be convinced, as he must be, of its utility, and not adopt the same practice ; especially as, at the death of Moses, he came into the same office. It is much more likely that he was instructed by Moses to continue that work which he himself had begun.

2. It is certain that Joshua did record some of the events which transpired under his administration ; “ and Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of the Lord,” (chap. xxiv. 26,) which renders it still more probable that he kept a regular register of events.

3. Whoever the author might be, it is more than barely hinted that he was one of those who passed into Canaan, for he says, “ The Lord had dried up the waters, until *we* were passed over.” (Chapter v. 1.)

4. The latter part of the twenty-fourth chapter, where the death and burial of Joshua are related, and which was obviously added by a later hand, differs in style from the rest of the book ; the same as the style of the latter part of Deuteronomy differs from the rest of that book.

Against this opinion, it is urged, that there are several things inserted in this book which show that it could not have been coeval with the transactions

it records. The statement (chap. iv. 9,) that the twelve stones set up as a memorial of the passage of the Jordan ‘*remain to this day*,’ was evidently written at a much later period. The same remark applies to the account of *Ai*. (chap. viii. 28.) Thus again we read (chap. xv. 63,) that the children of Judah could not drive out the Jebusites, the ancient inhabitants of Jerusalem, “but the Jebusites, dwell with the children of Judah *to this day*.” This last passage shows, however, that the book of Joshua could not have been compiled later than the reign of David, for he took the strong hold of Zion, and expelled the Jebusites. (2 Sam. v. 7—9.)

But in reply to these objections, it may be asked, “may not the same argument be urged against the genuineness of some of the books of the Pentateuch?” And if it is not allowed to have any weight in that case, why should it in this?

Upon the whole, then, it appears that the book, in the main, is the composition of Joshua himself.—
1. Because Joshua wrote it. 2. Because it is the relation of his own account, in the conquest, division and settlement of the promised land. 3. Because it contains a multitude of particulars that only himself, or a constant eye witness, could possibly relate. 4. Because it was evidently designed to be a continuation of the book of Deuteronomy, and is so connected with it, in narrative, as to prove that it must have been immediately commenced on the termination of the other.”—(*C. B. Vol. 2, p. 129.*)

This book contains an account of the mission of Joshua,—the spies who went to view the land,—the miraculous passage of the Jordan,—the renewal of

the covenant,—the conquest of Jericho, and Ai,—the history of the Gibeonites,—the conquest of the five kings,—the miracle of the sun standing still,—the conquest of Canaan completed,—general division of Canaan,—cities of refuge,—Joshua's last and faithful addresses to the tribes,—his death, &c.

“It comprises the history of about seventeen years, and is one of the most important documents in the old covenant. Between this book and the five books of Moses, there is the same analogy as between the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. The Pentateuch contains a history of the foundation of the Jewish church, and the laws by which it was to be governed. The book of Joshua gives an account of the establishment of that church in the land of Canaan, according to the oft repeated declarations and promises of God. The Gospels give an account of the origin and laws of Christianity, and the Acts of the Apostles give an account of the actual establishment of the Christian church, according to the predictions and promises of its great founder. Thus then, the Pentateuch bears a striking relation to the gospel, and the book of Joshua to the Acts of the Apostles. On this principle, it would be well to read these parts of the Old and New Testaments together, as they reflect a strong and mutual light upon each other.

“Whoever goes immediately from the reading of the Pentateuch to the reading of the Gospels, and from the reading of Joshua to the reading of the Acts, will carry with him advantages from this plan, which he will seek in vain from any other. To see the wisdom and goodness of God in the ritual of

Moses, we must have an eye continually on the incarnation and death of Christ, to which it continually refers. And to have a proper view of the great atonement made by the sacrifice of our Lord, we must have constant reference to the Mosaic law, where this is shadowed forth. Without this reference, the law of Moses is a system of expensive and burdensome ceremonies, destitute of adequate meaning; and without this entering in of the law, that the offence might abound, to show the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the frailty of man, and the holiness of God; the gospel of Christ, including the account of his incarnation, preaching, miracles, passion, death, burial, ascension and intercession, would not appear to have a sufficient necessity to explain and justify it. By the law is the knowledge of sin; *and by the gospel its cure!* Either, taken separately, will not answer the purpose for which God gave these astonishing revelations of his *justice* and his *grace*." —(Clarke.)

"The scope of the writer of this book seems to be, to demonstrate the faithfulness of God, in the full accomplishment of his promises made to the patriarchs, that their children should obtain possession of the land of Canaan. And as, in the New Testament, the land of Canaan is considered as a type of heaven, the trials, conflicts, and victories of the Israelites have been considered as adumbrating the spiritual trials, conflicts, and triumphs of believers in every age of the church.

"And although Joshua, whose courage, piety, and disinterested integrity, are conspicuous throughout his whole history, is not expressly mentioned in the

New Testament, as a type of the Messiah, yet he is universally allowed to have been a very eminent one. He bore our Saviour's name, which appellation is given to him in Acts vii. 45, and in Heb. iv. 8. Joshua saved the chosen people of God from their enemies ; and Jesus saves his people from their sins." —(*Horne.*)

Of the authenticity of this book, we have the strongest proofs that the case will admit. The greater part of it was evidently written immediately after the events recorded in it transpired, while the witnesses were still living, consequently the author's fidelity could be subjected to the test of examination. An appeal is made in it to the book of Jasher, (the upright or righteous,) which, whatever it may be to us, was well known to the Jews in their day, and was to them a sufficient voucher for the truth of the things contained in the sacred books. Several of the transactions related in this book are recorded or alluded to by other sacred writers. See, for example, Judges xviii. 31, compared with Joshua xviii. 1, and 1 Sam. iii. 21. See also Psalm xlv. 1—3; lxxviii. 55—65 ; lxviii. 13—15 ; cxiv. 1—5 ; Hab. iii. 8—13, compared with Joshua x. 9—11.

Several things related in this book are confirmed by the traditions of heathen nations, of which notice is taken in Allix's Reflections ; and the martyr Stephen, and the apostles Paul and James, having quoted from this book as from authentic records, and the Jews, in their day, making no objection, we may be well assured that it makes a part of the canonical scripture, and was " given by inspiration of God."

[See Acts vii. 4, 5 ; xiii. 19, 9 ; Heb. iv. 8—11 ; xi. 31, and James ii. 25.

THE BOOK OF JUDGES.

“ This book derives its name from its containing the ecclesiastical and civil history of the Israelites, from the death of Joshua to the high priesthood of Eli, under the government of the judges. These men were raised up by God out of several tribes, as necessity required, and were endowed with a spirit of wisdom and magnanimity to maintain his rights, and those of his people, and victoriously to vindicate them from the injustice of their oppressors, as well as to restore the purity of his worship, and defend the law which had been received from Him.

“ This book comprises the history of about three hundred years ; and is very properly inserted between those of Joshua and Samuel, as the judges were governors intermediate between Joshua and the kings of Israel. It gives an account of the further conquests of the Israelites, (chap. 1,)—the character of the people of Israel, (chap. 2,)—their captivities, and oppressions ; and deliverances under Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah and Barak, Gideon, Tola, Jair, Jephtha, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon and Samson.”

“ The book of Judges,” says Dr. Grey, “ presents us with a lively description of a fluctuating and unsettled nation ; a striking picture of the disorders and dangers which prevailed in a republic* without ma-

* *Republic* is a state governed by representatives elected by the people. The Jewish commonwealth was not much like a republic, at this time.

gistracy ; when ‘ the highways were unoccupied, and the travellers walked through by-ways ;’ when few prophets were appointed to control the people, and ‘ every one did that which was right in his own eyes.’ It exhibits the contest of true religion with superstition ; displays the beneficial effects that flow from the former, and represents the miseries that flow from the latter.” The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews has made honorable mention of the names of several of the principal characters mentioned in this book, and of their faith.

In reading the history of the times recorded in this book, it is necessary to bear in mind, that the Judges frequently acted under a divine impulse, and were endowed with supernatural courage and strength ; if this be lost sight of, it will be impossible to justify their conduct on many occasions ; but the sanction of a *divine warrant* supersedes all general rules of conduct.

From the circumstance of the author of this book remarking, that ‘ in those days there was no king in Israel,’ (chap. xix, 1 ; xxi. 25,) it has been supposed that it was written after the establishment of a regal government ; but however this may be, it is certain that the fact of the Jebusites still dwelling in Jerusalem, (chap. i. 21,) proves it to have been written before that city was captured by David, in the early part of his reign. (2 Sam. v. 6—8.

Dr. A. Clarke, Mr. Horne, and many others, after investigating the question, conclude that Samuel was, in all probability, the author of this book ; but whoever was the compiler, there is unquestion-

able evidence that it is justly entitled to a place in the sacred canon.

“In addition to the internal evidences of its authenticity which this book presents, we find it quoted by several of the other sacred writers. (See 1 Sam. xii. 9 ; 2 Sam. xi. 21 ; Ps. lxviii. 11 ; Isa. x. 4 ; x. 26 ; Acts xiii. 20 ; Heb. xi. 32.)

In some of its relations, we may trace the origin of mythological fables. In the story of Jephthah's daughter, we see the origin of the sacrificing of Iphigenia, it being usual with the heathens to attribute to their later heroes the glory of the actions of those who lived long before. The Vulpinaria, or feast of the foxes, celebrated among the ancient Romans, in the month of April—the time of the Jewish harvest—in which they let loose foxes with torches fastened to their tails, was derived from the story of Samson, and brought into Italy by the Phœnicians. And in the history of Samson and Delilah, we trace the original of the fable of Nisus and his daughter, who cut off those fatal hairs upon which the victory depended. In addition to which, it may be remarked, that the memorials of Gideon's actions, are preserved by Sanchoniathon, a Tyrian writer, who lived soon after Gideon, and whose antiquity as a historian is attested by Porphyry.”—(*Allix.*)

THE BOOK OF RUTH.

“This book, so called from its relating the history of a woman of that name, may be considered as an appendix to the book of Judges, and as an in-

roduction to those of Samuel, hence it is placed in our Bibles, between those books. In the Hebrew canon it formed part of the book of Judges, but as it contains a complete narrative of itself, it should not form any part of that book. At the feast of Pentecost this book is publicly read by the Jews, because the circumstances it relates, took place at the time of harvest.

“This book, like the two preceding ones, has been attributed to various authors. Some consider it as the production of Hezekiah ; others, as that of Ezra ; but the best founded opinion appears to be that which ascribes it to Samuel, and in this the Jews coincide. That it could not have been written before the time of Samuel, is certain from the genealogy recorded in chap. iv. 17—22. The design of the author seems to be to trace the genealogy of David from Judah, from which tribe the Messiah was to spring, according to the prophecy of Jacob.

“The history related in this book, is extremely interesting, and is detailed with the most beautiful simplicity, while it exhibits, in a striking and affecting manner, God’s providential care over those who walk in his fear, and sincerely aim at fulfilling his will. It has generally been considered that the Holy Spirit, by recording the adoption of a gentile woman into that family from which the Saviour was to descend, intended to intimate the future admission of the Gentiles into the church, and the comprehensive design of the Christian dispensation.”—*(C. B. Vol. II. p. 279.)*

Mr. Paine and other Infidels, have been greatly troubled about the nocturnal interview of Ruth with

Boaz, as though it were a crime of no ordinary magnitude. Not to say, that these gentlemen would not have known any thing about Boaz and Ruth but for the Bible, it is sufficient to observe, from the tenor of their writings, that in all such cases, they judge of others by themselves.

The authenticity of the book of Ruth has never been disputed ; and the Evangelists, in their genealogical tables, have followed its history, by placing Ruth among the ancestors of Christ. The several minute and sympathetic circumstances recorded, prove that no forger could have invented it : there is too much of *nature* to admit any thing of *art*.

THE FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL.

“This book contains the political and ecclesiastical history of the Israelites, from the birth of Samuel, during the administration of Eli, to the death of Saul their first king, a period of nearly eighty years, including more particularly, the birth, and call of Samuel to the prophetic office—the mal-administration of Eli’s sons—the victory of the Philistines over Israel—capture of the ark—death of Eli, and of his two sons—the punishment of the Philistines for retaining the ark—and their returning it thereupon—the consecration of Saul to the kingly office—Samuel’s faithful addresses to the people, (chap. 1 to 12,)—Saul’s mal-administration and loss of the kingdom—history of David and Jonathan—David’s election in the place of Saul—Saul’s persecution of David until his final defeat.

“In these books, the author illustrates the char-

acters, and describes the events in his history in the most engaging manner. The weak indulgence of Eli is well contrasted with the firm piety of Samuel. The rising virtues of David, and the sad depravity of Saul, are strikingly opposed. The sentiments and instructions scattered throughout are excellent; and the inspired hymn of Hannah, which much resembles that of the blessed Virgin Mary, discloses a grand prophecy of Christ, who is here, for the first time in scripture, spoken of as the Messiah, or anointed of the Lord, whose attributes are proclaimed as those of the exalted sovereign and appointed judge of the earth.”—(*C. B. Vol. II. p. 323.*)

Biblical critics are not agreed as to the author of this and the following book. Father Calmet was of opinion that they were both written by the same person—that they were constructed out of original and authentic documents, and that the compiler has generally used the terms which he found in those memoirs, adding occasionally something of his own by way of illustration. Dr. Clarke says, “The most probable opinion appears to be that which attributes the former part of the first book to the prophet whose name it bears, and the latter part, with the whole of the second book, to the prophets Gad and Nathan. That these three persons committed to writing the transactions of David’s reign is certain, from 1 Chron. xxix. 29; where it is said, ‘Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer.’”

But whoever was the author, it is certain that hea-

then writers have borrowed or collected from other sources, many particulars related in these books. (*See a case related in the Comprehensive Bible, in the concluding remarks on the first book.*) And in addition to this, we have the testimony of the New Testament writers to the truth of the things here recorded. (See Matt. xii. 3, 4; Mark ii. 25; Luke vi. 4; Acts ii. 29; vii. 46; and xiii. 21—23; Hebrews xi. 32.)

THE SECOND BOOK OF SAMUEL.

“This book carries on the history contained in the first, and brings it down to within about two years of the death of David; including a period of about forty years; and by recording the translation of the kingdom from the tribe of Benjamin to that of Judah, it relates the partial accomplishment of the prediction delivered in Gen. xlix. 10.

“This book contains, more particularly, David’s lamentation over Saul and Jonathan—his triumph over the house of Saul—the conquest of Zion, Jebus, or Jerusalem—the congratulations of Hiram king of Tyre—David’s purpose to build a house for the Lord—his several victories, sins, domestic and national troubles, chastisements, repentance and restoration to the divine favor—his psalm of thanksgiving, and a catalogue of his mighty men.

“The vicissitudes of events which this book describes; the fall and restoration of David; the effects of his errors, and his return to righteousness, are represented in the most interesting manner, and furnish valuable lessons to mankind. The heinous

sins and sincere repentance of David, are propounded, says Augustine, in order that, at the falls of such great men, others may tremble, and know what to avoid; and that, at their rising again, those who have fallen may know what to imitate."

"Among the conspicuous beauties of this book are the feeling lamentations of David over Saul and Jonathan, the expressive parable of Nathan, and the triumphant hymn of David.

"This book, as well as the former, contains intrinsic proofs of its verity. Besides the prophecies, some of which were fulfilled within a short period of their announcement; the sacred writer describes without disguise, the misconduct of those characters who were most revered by the people, and by appealing to monuments, then existing, for the truth of what he wrote, brought forward indisputable evidence of his faithful adherence to truth. The books of Samuel, read in connection with the book of Psalms, will be found to illustrate, in a remarkable manner, many of those sublime and devotional compositions."—(*C. B. Vol. II. p. 325.*)

THE FIRST BOOK OF KINGS.

This book comprises a period of 126 years from the anointing of Solomon, A. M. 2989, to the death of Jehosaphat, A. M. 3115. It relates the latter part of David's life, his death, and the accession of Solomon, whose reign comprehended the most prosperous and glorious period of the Israelitish history, and prefigured the peaceful reign of the Messiah, as did his erection and consecration of the

temple at Jerusalem, the beauty and perfection of the church of God. The history of the undivided kingdom includes the latter days of David—the rebellion of Adonijah, and the inauguration of Solomon—David's charge to Solomon a little before his death—Solomon's reign from the time of his father's death to the dedication of the temple—transactions during the latter part of his reign—his commerce, popularity, riches, apostacy, punishment and death. The history of the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah comprises the accession of Rehoboam, and the division of the tribes—the reigns of the different kings of Judah and Israel—part of the life of Elijah and the calling of Elisha—the remaining part of Ahab's reign, and the accession and reign of Jehosaphat.

THE SECOND BOOK OF KINGS.

“This book continues the cotemporary history of the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah, during a period of 300 years, from the death of Jehosaphat, A. M. 3115, to the destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, A. M. 3416. The connection, and occasional quarrels which subsisted between the two nations during part of this time, till the conquest of Samaria by Shalmanezar, appears to have induced the sacred writer to blend the two histories, as in some measure treating of the same people. Both nations appear to have departed with almost equal steps from the service of the true God ; and in the history of each we are presented with a succession of wicked and idolatrous

kings, till each kingdom had completed the measure of its iniquity. The whole period seems to have been dark and guilty ; the glory of the people of Israel being eclipsed by the calamities of the division of the tribes, and by the increasing miseries of idolatry and ambition. Successive tyrannies, treasons, seditions, and usurpations, and the almost instant punishment which they produced, serve at once to illustrate the evil character of the times, and the vigilant equity of the divine government.

“ Sixteen sovereigns filled the throne of Judah, from the time of Jehoram, son of Jehosaphat to the time of Zedekiah, in whose reign the kingdom of Judah was totally subverted ; and the people carried captive to Babylon, according to the ‘ word of the Lord ’ which he spake by his servant Isaiah. (Chap. 39.) During this period, numerous prophets flourished, both in Israel and Judah, as Elijah, Elisha, Jonah, Joel, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, Nahum, Jeremiah, Habakkuk, Daniel, Ezekiel, &c. This book may be divided into two parts ; part the first containing the history of the two kingdoms to the end of the kingdom of the ten tribes—part the second the history of the decline and fall of the kingdom of Judah.”—(*Grey’s Key*.)

“ It is evident that two descriptions of writers were concerned in the composition of the books of Kings. 1. Those original, primitive, and cotemporary authors who wrote the annals, journals, and memoirs of their own times ; from which the substance of our sacred history has been formed. These ancient memoirs have not descended to us, but were certainly in the hands of those sacred pen-

men whose writings are in our possession, since they cite them and refer to them. (See 2 Chron. xx. 34 ; xxvi. 22 ; xxxii. 32.)—2. Those writers who compiled and arranged the present books from those ancient and authentic documents. Some ascribe this work to Isaiah, others to Jeremiah; but the best supported opinion appears to be that which ascribes it to ‘*Ezra the scribe.*’ The proofs of which are these, 1. The editor lived after the Babylonish captivity. At the end of the second book of Kings, (chap. xxv. 22, 23,) he speaks of the return from that captivity. 2. He describes the ten tribes as still captive in Assyria, (chap. xvii. 3,) and introduces reflections on the calamities of Israel and Judah, which demonstrates that he wrote after these events. 3. He almost every where refers to ancient memoirs which he had before him, and abridged. 4. There is every reason to believe that the editor was a priest, or a prophet. He studies less to describe acts of heroism, successful battles, conquests, political addresses, &c., than what regards the temple, religion, religious ceremonies, festivals, the worship of God, the piety of princes, the fidelity of the prophets, the punishment of crimes, the manifestation of God’s anger against the wicked, and his kindness to the righteous. He appears every where attached to the house of David ; he treats of the kings of Israel only incidentally ; his principal object seems to be the kingdom of Judah, and the matters which concern it.

“All this agrees well with the supposition that EZRA was the compiler of these books, who is universally allowed, by the Jews, to have been the col-

lector and compiler of the different books which constitute the Old Testament. The apparent contradictions to this hypothesis may be easily reconciled by admitting that he copied word for word the documents in his possession, and then added (as is generally the case with all historians) such illustrations and reflections as arose out of his subject. This shows that he was master of the matter that he was discussing ; and being inspired, he was not afraid of intermixing his own words with those of the prophets, whose writings lay before him."

The authenticity and inspiration of these books are attested by the prophecies they contain, and which were subsequently fulfilled ; by the citations of our Saviour and his apostles ; by their universal reception by the Jewish and Christian churches, and by the corresponding testimonies of ancient profane writers. *The following is remarkable, and worthy of regard, as it affords an indubitable proof of the truth of a part of Scripture history.* The part is this,—“ In the 14th chapter of the first book of Kings, and in 2 Chron. 12th chapter, it is recorded that ‘ In the fifth year of Rehoboam, son of Solomon, Shishak, king of Egypt, came up against Jerusalem, and took away the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king’s house, and the shields of gold which Solomon had made.’ Of this event we have no mention made in profane history, and consequently nothing to corroborate the testimony of the sacred historian ; but a confirmation of this fact has recently been brought to light, after the long period of 2800 years. From the researches of M. Champollion, it appears that Shishak was the builder

of one of the magnificent palaces of ancient Thebes, the ruins of which are still to be seen at Karnac. On one of the walls of this palace there is sculptured a grand triumphal ceremony, in which the Pharaoh of Egypt is represented as dragging the chiefs of above thirty conquered nations, to the feet of the idols of Thebes. Among these captives is one whose name is plainly written in hieroglyphical letters, ‘the king of Judah.’” This whole account, with the figure of the Jewish king, may be seen in the Saturday Magazine, No. 82.

THE FIRST AND SECOND BOOKS OF CHRONICLES.

“These books were first called “*Chronicles*,” by Jerome, which name seems most appropriate, because they contain an abstract, in order of time, of the whole of the sacred history, to the period when they were written. The first book traces the rise and propagation of the people of Israel from Adam, and afterwards gives a circumstantial account of the reign and transactions of David. In the second book, the narrative is continued, and relates the progress and dissolution of the kingdom of Judah, to the very year of the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity. As very little notice is taken of the kings of Israel, it is most probable that this book was extracted chiefly from the records of the kingdom of Judah.”

“The period of time embraced in the books of Chronicles, is about 3468 years, and may commodiously be divided into four parts. 1. The genealogies of those persons through whom the Messiah

was to descend, from Adam to the captivity. 2. The histories of Saul and David. 3. The history of the united kingdoms of Israel and Judah, under Solomon. 4. The history of the kingdom of Judah after its division, to the utter subversion by Nebuchadnezzar."

"The principal object of the author of these books appears to have been, to point out, from the public records still preserved, the state of the different families before the captivity, with the distribution of the lands, that each tribe might, as far as possible, obtain the ancient inheritance of their fathers, at their return. He enters particularly into the genealogies, families, orders, and duties of the Priests and Levites, that they might more easily assume their proper functions; and that the worship of God might be conducted the same as before, by the ordained and legitimate persons. He recites from several rolls, or numberings of the people; one taken in the time of David; a second in the time of Jeroboam; a third in the time of Jotham; and a fourth during the captivity of the ten tribes, which shows the extreme accuracy of the Jews in preserving their genealogies and historical documents. These tables are a signal testimony to the origin and preservation of the Jewish church among mankind: and of the fulfilment of the Divine promises to Abraham, that his seed should be multiplied as the sand upon the sea-shore. They are also of very great importance, as exhibiting the detail of the sacred line, through which the promise of the Messiah was transmitted; so that when Christ came, the people

might know that he was, according to the flesh, ‘the son of David, the son of Abraham.’” *Allix*.

Independently of the moral and religious instruction to be derived from the two books of Chronicles, as illustrating the Divine dispensations toward this highly favored, but ungrateful people, the second book is extremely valuable in a critical point of view; as containing some historical particulars which are not mentioned in any other part of the Old Testament.

In confirmation of the truth of the things related in the books of the Kings and Chronicles, it may be remarked again, that several heathen authors, as Nicholas Damascenus, Herodotus, Ovid, Berosus, Strabo, Polybius, Sallust, and others, as may be seen in *Allix's Reflections* on the historical books, have recorded many of the same things, and it would be strange indeed how all sorts of historians, of all nations and all ages, could agree so exactly with the Jews, in the facts which they relate, if the Jewish authors had not exactly followed the rules of truth. But, whatever doubts may exist on this head, the sincere inquirer after truth will be convinced of the authenticity of these books, by comparing 1. Chron. xxiii. 13; with Heb. v. 4; xxiv. 7—10; with Luke i. 5; 2 Chron. ix. 1; with Matt. xii. 42; and Luke xi. 31; 2 Chron. xxiv. 20, 21; with Matt. xxiii. 35; and Luke xi. 51; 1 Chron. xvii. 13, and xxii. 10; with Acts vii. 47, and Heb. i. 5. On this subject the unanimous voice of the Jewish and Christian churches is, “Their authenticity and canonical authority have never been doubted.”

THE BOOK OF EZRA.

“This book is a continuation of the Jewish history, from the time at which the Chronicles conclude. It begins with a repetition of the two verses which terminate those books. The first six chapters relate the return of the Jews under Zerubbabel, after their appointed period of captivity ; their re-establishment in Judea ; and the rebuilding and dedication of the temple. The last four chapters give an account of the appointment of Ezra to the government of Judea, by Artaxerxes Longimanus ; his return to Jerusalem ; the disobedience of the Jews ; and the reformation he effected among them. The period of time embraced in this history, is, as some chronologers compute, about 80 years ; according to others, 100 years.

“This book harmonizes most strictly with the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah, which it materially elucidates, (comp. chap. v. with Hag. i. 12 ; and Zech. iii. 1—4,) which should be read with it, to complete the thread of history. It contains the edict of Cyrus granting the Jews permission to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple—an account of the people who returned—the laying the foundation of the temple—the opposition of the Samaritans—the subsequent decree of Darius—the return of Ezra from Babylon, with a commission from Artaxerxes Longimanus—his arrival at Jerusalem—his prayer—and the reformation by him effected.”—(*C. B. Vol. III. p. 282.*

The following extract from the works of the

learned Prideaux, will show the work in which *Ezra* was engaged—the high esteem in which he was held by the Jews, and the part he took in arranging the Hebrew scriptures :—

“By virtue of the commission he had from the king, and the powers granted him thereby, Ezra reformed the whole of the Jewish church, according to the law of Moses, in which he was so excellently learned, and settled it upon that foundation upon which it afterward stood, to the time of our Saviour. The two chief things which he had to do were, to restore the observance of the Jewish law, according to the ancient approved usages which had been in practice before the captivity, under the directions of the prophets, and to collect together and set forth a correct edition of the Holy Scriptures ; in the performance of both which, the Jews tell us, he had the assistance of the Great Synagogue, a convention consisting of one hundred and twenty men. But the whole conduct of this work, and the glory of accomplishing it is, by the Jews, chiefly attributed to him, under whose presidency, they tell us, it was done. And therefore, they look on him as *another Moses*. For the law, they say, was given by Moses, but it was revived and restored by Ezra, after it had been, in a manner, extinguished and lost in the Babylonish captivity. And therefore they reckon him as the second founder of it, and it is a common opinion among them that he was Malachi, the Prophet ; that he was called Ezra, as his proper name, and Malachi, (which signifies an angel or messenger) from his office, because he was sent as the angel and messenger of God to

restore again the Jewish religion, and establish it in the same manner as it was before the captivity, on the foundation of the law and the prophets. And, indeed, by virtue of that ample commission which he had from king Artaxerxes, he had an opportunity of doing more herein than any other of his nation, and he executed all the powers thereof to the utmost he was able, for the re-settling both of the ecclesiastical and political state of the Jews, in the best posture they were capable of; and from hence his name is in so high esteem and veneration among the Jews, that it is a common saying among them, that if the law had not been given by Moses, Ezra was worthy to have given it.

“But the great work of Ezra was his collecting together and setting forth a correct edition of the Holy Scriptures, in which he labored much, and in the perfection of which, he went a great way. In the time of Josiah, the Book of the Law was so destroyed and lost, that besides that copy of it which Hilkiah found in the temple, there was then no other to be had. For if the king and the high priest, who were both men of eminent piety, were without this part of Holy Scripture, it can scarce be thought that any one else had it. But so religious a prince as king Josiah could not have this long unremedied. By his order, copies were forthwith written out from this original, and search being made for all the other parts of Holy Scripture, both in the colleges of the sons of the prophets, and all other places where they could be found, care was taken for manuscripts to be made out of these also, and thenceforth copies of the whole became multiplied among the people; all those who were desirous of knowing the laws of

their God, either writing them out themselves, or procuring others to do it for them. So that though within a few years after, the holy city and temple were destroyed, and the authentic copy of the law which was laid up before the Lord, was burnt and consumed with them, yet by this time, many copies, both of the Law and the Prophets, and all the other sacred writings, were got into private hands, who carried them with them into captivity.

“ That Daniel had a copy of the Holy Scriptures with him, in Babylon, is certain ; for he quotes the Law and the Prophets, (chap. ix. 2—13,) which he could not do, had he never seen them. And in the sixth chapter of Ezra it is said, that on the finishing of the temple, in the sixth year of Darius, the Priests and the Levites were settled in their respective functions, according to the law of Moses. But how could they do this according to the written law, if they had not copies of that law then among them ? And further, in the eighth chapter of Nehemiah, when the people called for the law of Moses, to have it read to them ; they did not pray Ezra to get it dictated to him anew ; but that he should bring forth the book of the law of Moses which the Lord had commanded to Israel ; which plainly shows that the book was then well known. All, therefore, that Ezra did in this matter was, to get together as many copies of the sacred writings as he could, and out of them all to set forth a correct edition, in the performance of which, he took care of the following particulars :

“ 1. He corrected all the errors that had crept into these copies, through the negligence or mistakes

of transcribers ; for by comparing them one with the other, he found out the true reading.

“2. He collected together all the books of which the Holy Scriptures did then consist, and disposed them in their proper order, and settled the canon of scripture for his time. These books he divided into three parts ; i. e. the Law, the Prophets, and the holy writings ; which division our Saviour himself takes notice of (Luke xxiv. 44,) where he saith, ‘all things must be fulfilled which are written in the Law and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me.’ For there, by the Psalms, he means the whole third part, called the Hagiographa, or holy writings. For that part beginning with the Psalms, the whole was, for that reason, commonly called by that name ; as, usually with the Jews, the particular books are named from the words with which they begin. Thus, with them, Genesis is called *Bereshith*—‘in the beginning,’ because that book commences with that word, and so on of the books following.

“3. The third thing which Ezra did about the Holy Scriptures, was, he added in several places throughout the books, that which appeared necessary for the illustrating, connecting, or completing them, wherein he was assisted by the same Spirit by which they were at first written. But these additions do not in the least detract any thing from the divine authority of the whole, because they were all inserted by the direction of the same Holy Spirit which dictated all the rest. This, as to Ezra, is without dispute, he being himself one of the divine penmen of the Holy Scriptures ; for he was most certainly the writer of that book in the Old

Testament which bears his name, and is, upon good grounds, supposed to be the author of two more ; that is, of the two books of Chronicles, as probably also he was of the book of Esther. And if these books, written by him, be of divine authority, why may not every thing else be so which he hath added to any of the rest, since there is all reason for us to suppose that he was as much directed by the Holy Spirit of God in the one, as he was in the other ? For as it was necessary for the church of God that this work should be done, so also was it necessary for the work, that the person called there-to should be assisted in the completing of it.

“ 4. He changed the old names of several places that were grown obsolete, putting instead of them the new names by which they were at that time called, that the people might the better understand what was written. Thus, (*Gen. xiv. 14.*) Abraham is said to have pursued the kings who carried Lot away captive, as far as Dan, whereas the name of that place was Laish, till the Danites, long after the death of Moses, possessed themselves of it, and called it Dan, after the name of their father. And therefore it could not be called Dan in the original copy of Moses, but that name must have been put in afterwards instead of that of Laish. And so of several other places in Genesis ; as also in Numbers we find mention made of Hebron, whereas the name of that city was Kirjath Arba, till Caleb, having obtained possession of it, called it Hebron, after the name of one of his sons ; and therefore that name could not be in the text, till placed there, long after the death of Moses, by way of ex-

change for Kirjath Arba ; which, it is not to be doubted, was done at the time of this review by Ezra. And many other like examples might be given, whereby it appears that the study of those who governed the church of God in those times was, to render the Scriptures as plain and intelligible to the people as they could, and not to hide or conceal any of it from them.

“ 5. He wrote out the whole in the Chaldee character : for that having now grown wholly into use among the people after the Babylonish captivity, he changed the old Hebrew character for it ; which hath since that time been retained only by the Samaritans, among whom it is preserved even to this day.”

THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH.

“ This book contains an account of Nehemiah’s sorrow, fasting and prayer, on hearing of the affliction of his brethren in Jerusalem. At this time he was cup-bearer to the king of Persia, who, on observing his grief, and inquiring into the cause thereof, gave him permission to visit Jerusalem. Having succeeded in his design, he arrived at Jerusalem, vested with full power and authority to complete the great work, which had been in part accomplished by his predecessor, Ezra. After having governed Judea twelve years, he returned to Persia, and after continuing there some time, obtained permission to return to Jerusalem, where, it is probable, he died. Beside these statements, the Book of Nehemiah contains,—a register of the persons who returned from Babylon ; an account of the building and dedi-

cation of the walls of Jerusalem; the reading of the Law, with the celebration of the feast of Tabernacles; a solemn fast, with the renewal of the Covenant, &c.”—*Clarke*.

THE BOOK OF ESTHER.

“This book derives its name from the principal person who appears therein; a virtuous Jewess, who obtained the favor of Ahasuerus, a Persian monarch, and thus preserved her people from a furious persecution. Such is the estimation in which this book is held by the Jews, that they believe, whatever may be the fate of the other canonical books, this will ever be preserved. From the circumstance of no mention being made in this book, of the name of God, some of the Christian Fathers have felt disposed to expunge it from the Bible. This, however, can afford no reason for such an act, while the history it relates is such as to confirm the doctrine of an overruling Providence, in the moral government of the world, and to show that the Lord careth for the righteous.”

Of the authenticity of this book there can be no doubt. The feast of *Purim* was instituted, and is still kept up among the Jews, in memory of their deliverance from their evil machinations of *Haman*. “The day before the feast they observe as a fast, because on that day the fathers fasted, when they were threatened with utter destruction. The two following days are days of high feasting and mirth; for on these days they hold it lawful to drink to excess. The *chassan* reads the whole book of Esther,

not out of a printed copy, but from a roll kept on purpose. Every one who is able is required to come to this feast to join in the reading, for the better preservation of this important fact. While the *chassan* is reading, as often as the name of Haman occurs, the whole auditory cry out, ‘Let his name be blotted out,’ or ‘Let his memory perish.’ The children at the same time hissing, and striking loudly on the forms with little wooden hammers made for the purpose. When the reading is finished, all cry aloud, ‘Cursed be Haman! Blessed be Mordecai! Cursed be Zeresh! Blessed be Esther! Cursed be all idolaters! Blessed be all the Israelites; And blessed be Harbonah,’ at whose instance Haman was hanged!”—(*Clarke.*)

The historical part of the Old Testament closes here; but it may be proper to add a few reflections. We have before us the most ancient and the most authentic history in the world. Beginning with the birth of time, and the creation of the first human pair; the sacred historian brings down his deeply interesting narrative through many generations, to the time when God “formed for himself a people who should show forth his praise.” The history of this people is also traced with an unerring hand, from the call of Abraham their father, to the destruction of their famous temple, and their dispersion in part, among the Chaldeans, the Assyrians, and the Persians. Would we know any thing of the true history of a people to whom we are indebted for that part of the Bible which is called the Old Testament? in the books which constitute that part of the sacred volume, their history is fully and faith-

fully delineated. Here we tread on "rich historic ground"—all beyond is conjecture, uncertainty, or fable! Would we know the true origin of those mutilated and disfigured accounts, which constitute an important part of "classic lore," such as the *Chaos* of Sanconiatho, Hesiod, Aristophanes, Diodorus Siculus, Ovid, and others—their fabled Prometheus, Deucalion, Hermes Trismegistus, Iphigenia, Nisus, Phæton, &c. &c., we have only to turn to our Bibles, and there we can read the undisguised and simple truth.

And now, if any one should be found so far beneath the standard of reason and common sense, as to say, that these authentic records are the offspring of priestcraft, let him know that it is evident that the Protestant priests had no hand in writing them, for they were written long before their time, for Luther and Wiclif only translated them. It is equally certain that the Catholic priests are exempt, for they were completed long before their time. And as to Ezra the priest, who probably arranged them, it is certain that many of them were in existence long before his time. But though some of them had existed from the time of Aaron the priest, there is no evidence that he wrote them. And it is certain that the Egyptian priests, for the credit of their craft, would not write them. As well might we suppose that Elias Hicks wrote Barclay's Apology, as to suppose that the historical books of the Old Testament are the offspring of priestcraft.

LECTURE III.

ON THE POETICAL BOOKS.

“For whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope.”—Romans xv. 4.

“THOSE books which, by the Hebrews, are termed *Hagiographia*, or *Holy Writings*, are Job, the Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon. They are termed *poetical*, because they are generally composed in measured sentences, and possess what has been considered as the distinguishing characteristic of Hebrew poetry. They are placed in our Bibles between the historical and the prophetic books.”—*Critica Biblica*, Vol. IV. p. 349.

THE BOOK OF JOB.

“This is one of the most extraordinary books of the Holy Scriptures, and has occupied the attention of the learned in all ages. There has been much diversity of opinion concerning its hero, chronology, character, and author. Some have denied the actu-

al existence of the venerable patriarch, and considered the book as a fictitious narrative, intended to instruct through the medium of parable. But that such a notion should have been entertained by persons who credit the writings of Ezekiel and James, is something calculated to excite surprise. Both these inspired writers speak of him as a real, and not a fictitious personage. (See Ezek. xiv. 14 ; and James v. 11.) To this we may add, that he is also mentioned as a real person, in the Apocryphal book of Tobit ; as such he has been contemplated from time immemorial in Arabia and Palestine ; and no good reason can be given why we should abandon an opinion so strongly supported. With regard to the time when the events here recorded took place, and when the history was committed to writing, critics are by no means agreed. Some are of opinion that it was the earliest written of all the books of the Bible ; while others ascribe it to the time subsequent to the captivity. It has been attributed to Moses, to Elihu, to Job, to Solomon, and to Ezra. To enter into an examination of these several opinions, each of which has been advocated by men of the profoundest learning and ability, would exceed the limits of this discourse, nor would it prove materially edifying to the reader.”—(*C. B.*)

“Those who wish to investigate the claims of these different hypotheses, may consult the writings of Lowth, Stock, Warburton, Peters, Faber, Good, Horne, and Dr. A. Clarke. Dr. Hales was of opinion that Job lived before the time of Abraham, and in support of this opinion, Mr. Townsend, in his arrangement of the Old Testament, has added several

weighty arguments. In the opinion of these writers, the book was written by Job himself, or one of his cotemporaries, and was obtained by Moses when in the land of Midian, and by him prepared for the use of the Israelites. The country in which this scene is laid, is said to be the land of Uz, which Mr. Good has distinctly shown to be the land of Idumea.'

"Of the character and structure of this extraordinary book, as a literary composition, several opinions have been entertained. Calmet, Warburton, and others, have regarded it as a drama. Bp. Lowth conceived it to be of a mixed character. Mr. Good considered it as a regular epic poem. Dr. Clarke, whose opinion coincides nearly with that of Bp. Lowth, says, 'It is a *poem* of the highest order; dealing in *subjects* the most grand and sublime; using *imagery* the most chaste and appropriate; described by *language* the most happy and energetic; conveying *instruction*, both in divine and human things, the most ennobling and useful; abounding in precepts the most pure and exalted, which are enforced by *arguments* the most strong and conclusive, and illustrated by *examples* the most natural and striking.'"

"The general scope and moral of this sublime production, namely, that the troubles and afflictions of a good man are, for the most part, designed as tests of his virtue and integrity, out of which he will at length emerge with additional splendor and happiness, are common to eastern poets, and not uncommon to those of Greece. But, in various respects, the poem of Job stands unrivalled and alone. In

addition to every species almost of corporeal suffering and privation which it is possible for man to endure, it carries forward the trial in a manner, and to an extent, which has never been attempted elsewhere, into the keenest faculties and sensations of the mind, and mixes the bitterest taunts and accusations of friendship with the agonies of family bereavement and despair. The body of other poems consists chiefly of incidents,—this of colloquy or argument, in which the train of reasoning is so well sustained, its matter so important, its language so ornamented, its doctrines so sublime, its transitions so varied and abrupt, that the want of incident is not felt, and the attention is still rivetted as by enchantment.

“In other poems, the supernatural agency is fictitious, and often incongruous ; here, the whole is solid reality, supported in its grand outline by the concurrent testimony of every other part of Scripture ; an agency not obtrusively introduced, but demanded by the magnitude of the occasion ; and as much more exalted and magnificent than every other kind of similar interference, as it is more veritable and solemn. The suffering hero is sublimely called forth to the performance of his part, in the presence of men and angels ; each of whom becomes interested, and equally interested in his conduct ; the Almighty assents to the trial, and for a period withdraws his aid ; the malice of Satan is in its full career of activity ; hell hopes, earth trembles, and every good spirit is suspended with awful anxiety. The wreck of his substance is in vain ; the wreck of his family is in vain ; the scalding sores

of a corroding disease are in vain ; the artillery of insults, reproaches, and railing, poured forth from the mouths of bosom friends, is in vain. Though at times put, in some degree, off his guard, the holy sufferer is never completely overpowered. He sustains the shock without yielding ; he still holds fast his integrity. Thus terminates the trial of his faith ; Satan is confounded ; faith triumphs ; and the Almighty, with a magnificence well worthy of the occasion, unveils his resplendent tribunal, and crowns the afflicted champion with applause." (*Good's Prelim. Dis. C. B. Vol. IV.*)

"The scope of the Almighty's speech," says bishop Stock, "is to humble Job, and teach others, by his example, to acquiesce in the Divine dispensations, from an unbounded confidence in his wisdom, equity, and goodness,—an end worthy the interposition of the Deity. On the conclusion of this address, Job humbles himself, acknowledges his ignorance, repents as in dust and ashes, offers sacrifices for his friends, and is restored to double prosperity, comfort, and honor."

Bishop Lowth is of opinion, that "the principal object of the poem is the third and last trial of Job, from the unkindness and unjustness of his accusing friends ; the consequences of which are, in the first place, the anger, indignation, and contumacy of Job, and afterward his composure, submission, and penitence. The design of the poem is, therefore, to teach men, that, having a due respect to the corruption, infirmity, and ignorance of human nature, as well as to the infinite wisdom and majesty of God, they are to reject all confidence of their own strength, and in their own righteousness, and to

preserve, on all occasions, an unwavering and unsullied faith, and to submit, with becoming reverence, to the righteous decrees of heaven.”—(*C. B. Vol. IV.*)

The chief doctrines of the patriarchal religion, as collected from different parts of the poem, may be summed up thus :—

1. The creation of the world by one supreme and eternal Intelligence, who is recognized throughout the book, as the proper object of adoration, worship, hope, trust, and fear.

2. The government of the world by one eternal, omnipresent, omniscient, almighty, and all-perfect Being.

3. The intention of his providence carried into effect by the ministration of angels.

4. A heavenly hierarchy, composed of different orders.

5. An apostacy or defection in some ranks or orders of these powers, of which Satan seems to have been one, and perhaps chief.

6. A day of future resurrection, judgment, and retribution, to all mankind.

7. The doctrine of vicarious atonement, and the mediation and intercession of a righteous person.

8. Idolatry a judicial offence, to be punished by the judge.

9. The innate corruption of man, or what is generally termed *original sin*.

The following reflections of Dr. Clarke, on the case of Job, are too important to be overlooked :—

“ Job certainly was not a grievous sinner, but a most upright man. This point is sufficiently proved

by the testimony of God, who cannot be deceived himself, and cannot deceive others. But at the time in question, he was not cleansed from inward sin. This removes all contradiction from what he asserts, and what he accedes. When a man sees himself in the light of God, he sees what, by his own discernment, wisdom, and reason, he had never seen before. His mind might have been previously imbued with the principles of justice, righteousness and truth ; his whole conduct regulated by them ; and he be conscious to himself that he had not wickedly departed from the laws imposed on him by these principles. But when the light that maketh manifest, shines through the inmost recesses of the heart, then spiritual wickedness becomes evident, and the deceitfulness of the heart is discovered. This light refers every thing to the divine standard—the holiness of God ; and the man's own righteousness in this comparison is found to be imperfection itself, and little short of impurity. Job appears to have been in this state ; he thought himself rich and increased in goods, and to have need of nothing ; but when God shone upon his heart, he found himself to be wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked ; and he was then as ready to confess his great vileness, as he was before to assert and vindicate the unimpeachable righteousness of his conduct. Here was no contradiction. His friends attacked him on the ground of his being a bad and wicked man ! This charge he repels with indignation, and dares them to the proof. They had nothing to allege but their *systems* and their *suspensions*, that is, ‘ he who suffers must be a

sinner.' (John ix. 2.) Job being convinced that this was *false*, as applied to him, and knowing his own innocence, boldly requires on their ground *why* God contended with him? God answers for himself; humbles the self confident, yet upright man; shines into his heart, and then he sees that he is *vile*; just as when a beam of solar light is let into a dusty apartment, we see ten thousand motes dancing in the sunbeam, which we did not discover before. Shall it be said, after this, that the conduct of Divine providence cannot be vindicated in suffering an upright man to become a butt for the malice of Satan for so long a time, and for no purpose? The most important purposes were accomplished by this trial. Job became a much better man than he was before; the dispensations of God's providence were illustrated, and justified; Satan's devices unmasked; patience crowned and rewarded; *and the church of God greatly enriched, by having bequeathed to it that vast treasury of divine truth which is found in the book of Job.*"

THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

"This collection of sacred hymns, or odes, has ever been held in the highest estimation by the Christian, as well as by the Jewish church. Athanasius styles them *an epitome of the whole Scriptures*; Basil, *a compendium of all theology*; Luther, *a little Bible, and the summary of the Old Testament*; and Melancton, *the most elegant writing in the whole world*. It contains instruction and comfort for the truly pious, whatever may be their experience or the cir-

cumstances in which they are placed. The principal part of these divine compositions was written by David, whose merits as a poet, a musician, and a prophet, have given a name to the whole collection; the others were written by Moses, Solomon, Asaph, Heman, Nathan, Jeduthun, and the sons of Korah; and the whole were collected, most probably, by Ezra the scribe. Upon the titles prefixed to many of the psalms, implicit confidence cannot be placed; nor is it certain that the Jews who attached these notices, intended to denote that they were by or for such persons.

“The right of the book of Psalms to a place in the sacred canon, has never been disputed; and its divine authority has been attested by the quotations of our Saviour and his apostles, as well as by the numerous predictions which are dispersed throughout, and which have been subsequently fulfilled, (see particularly *Psa. xxii.*) In these compositions, we are presented with every variety of Hebrew poetry; some of them were prepared for particular solemnities in the Jewish worship; others appear to have been designed generally to celebrate the glorious perfections of God; and others to have been drawn forth by the peculiar circumstances or experience of the inspired writers.

“These sublime odes abound in the most impressive and consoling predictions. One, greater than David, is continually presenting himself to our view—even Christ the Redeemer. Divine inspiration so guided the Psalmist, that in many instances his words, at the same time that they referred, with sufficient precision, to the circumstances of his own

life, prefigured in terms the most accurate, and the most sublime ; the humiliation, the sufferings, the triumphant resurrection, and the universal and eternal kingdom of the Messiah. Bp. Horsely has considered the greater part of the psalms as a kind of dramatic ode, consisting of dialogues between certain persons, sustaining certain characters ; and by arranging them on this principle, he has thrown considerable light on some of these unrivalled compositions, which before appeared to want consistency and harmony." (*C. B. Vol. IV.*)

"There is another difficulty (says Dr. Clarke,) with which almost every reader is puzzled, viz., How is it that in the same psalm we find so many different states of mind and circumstances pointed out? These could not be the experience of one and the same person at the same time. The answer that is commonly given, is this,—such psalms were composed *after* the full termination of the events which they celebrate. The 39th psalm is a case in point, to which the reader is referred. And it is possible that the psalmist, having obtained deliverance from sore and oppressive evils, might sit down to compose a hymn of thanksgiving to God ; and in order to do this more effectually, might describe the different circumstances through which he had passed, as if he were then passing through them. But this, to me, is not a satisfactory solution. I rather suppose that such psalms were composed from diaries, or private memoranda ; and in forming a psalm, materials out of different days, having little congruity with each other, as to the time in which they happened, would necessarily enter into the

composition. This supposition will, in my opinion, account for all anomalies of this kind, which we perceive in the book of Psalms."

But even this solution does not satisfy every one; it does not fully comport with the idea of immediate and plenary inspiration. Most probably, therefore, the psalmist wrote, as well as spoke, as he was "moved thereto by the Holy Ghost," not by the help of previous memoranda, but in words which the Holy Spirit taught him at the time. The Psalms were composed for the use of the church, in which there are not only "all sorts and conditions of men," but every variety of spiritual state felt by the various members thereof at the self-same hour, so that during thereading of the psalm, one verse may suit the state of one member of the church, and another verse that of another.

But a greater difficulty, with many, still remains, viz. How David, or any other good man, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, could use such imprecations as are found in the book of psalms? For example, how could David, as in the 109th Psalm, wish so much evil upon his enemies? To understand this subject rightly, we must remember that "to curse," in the scriptural sense, is either to inflict, or to pronounce, or to predict a curse upon any thing, or any one. In the first sense, God "cursed," that is, inflicted a curse upon "the serpent," and upon the earth for man's sake. In the second sense, Jacob cursed the fury of Simeon and Levi, who murdered the Shechemites, and plundered their city, and in the third sense, Noah cursed the posterity of Ham, in which sense, also, Joshua cursed him who should

undertake to build Jericho. The curses, therefore, which David seems to wish upon his enemies, are not to be taken as the effects of passion or revenge, but may be considered as predictions of what would befall them.* And as David was an eminent type of Christ, and as the enemies of David were, in too many instances, types of the enemies of Christ, the curses in this book will be found to apply eminently to them.

“The *Hebrew Psalter* is the most ancient collection of poems in the world; and was composed long before those in which ancient Greece and Rome have gloried. Among all the heathen nations, Greece had the honor of producing not only the *first*, but also the most sublime of poets; but the subjects on which they employed their talents had, in general, but little tendency to meliorate the moral condition of men. Their subjects were either a fabulous theology, a false and ridiculous religion, chimerical wars, absurd heroism, impure love, agriculture, national sports, or hymns in honor of gods more corrupt than the most profligate of men. Their writings served only to render vice amiable, to honor superstition, to favor the most dangerous and most degrading passions of man, such as impure love, ambition, pride, and impiety. What is said of the Greek poets, may be spoken with equal truth of the Latins; out of the whole of whose writings, notwithstanding their luminous thoughts and fine ex-

* Even in this psalm, where so many dreadful imprecations are found, David says, “For my *love* they are my adversaries—they have rewarded me *evil* for *good*.” Ver. 4 and 5.

pressions, it would be difficult to extract even the common maxims of a decent morality.

“The Hebrew poets, on the contrary, justly boast the highest antiquity, several of them being before Homer. They were men inspired of God, holy in their lives, pure in their hearts, laboring for the good of mankind; proclaiming, by their incomparable compositions, the infinite perfections, attributes, and unity of the divine nature; laying down and illustrating the purest rules of the most refined morality, and the most exalted piety. God—His attributes, His works, and the religion which He has given to men, were the grand subjects of their divinely inspired muse. By their wonderful art, they not only embellished the history of their own people, because connected intimately with the history of God’s providence; but they also, by the light of the Spirit of God that was in them, foretold future events of the most unlikely occurrence, at the distance of many hundreds of years, with such exactness as has been the wonder and astonishment of considerate minds, in all succeeding generations; a fact which, taken in its connection with the holiness and sublimity of their doctrine; the grandeur, boldness, and truth of their imagery; demonstrate minds under the immediate inspiration of God.

“Some of the greatest, both of the Greek and Roman poets, were men obscure in their birth, desperate in their fortune, and profligate in their manners; a fact at once proved both by their history, and by their works. But the Hebrew poets were among the greatest men of their nation; and among them were found kings of the highest char-

acter, judges of the greatest integrity, heroes the most renowned, and lawgivers whose fame has reached to almost every nation of the earth. By means of these men, the lamp of true religion has been lighted in the earth ; and wherever there is a ray of truth among the sons of men, it is an emanation, taken immediately, or indirectly borrowed, from the prophets, poets, or statesmen of the sons of Jacob.”—*Dr. Clarke.*

THE BOOK OF PROVERBS.

“This book, with the probable exception of the two concluding chapters, was composed, or collected, at least, by Solomon, (chap. i. 1 ; xi. 26.) The 30th chapter seems to have been penned by Agur, son of Jakeh, of whom we nowhere else read ; and the last chapter contains the instructions given to Lemuel by his mother, of both of whom we are equally ignorant. From the first verse of the twenty-fifth chapter, it has been inferred that the proverbs following were collected out of the other writings of Solomon, and placed in the order in which we now possess them. The design of the writers may be gathered from the first three verses ; and so admirably adapted to the purposes of instruction, have these pointed and sententious maxims been, that many heathen philosophers and legislators have drawn their brightest sentiments from this book. The Proverbs are frequently quoted in the New Testament by Christ and his apostles.” (See Matt. xv. 4 ; Luke xiv. 10 ; Rom. xii. 16—20 ; 1 Thess. v. 14 ; 1 Pet. iv. 8 ; v. 5 : James iv. 6, &c.)

“There has scarcely been any dispute,” says Dr. A. Clarke, “concerning either the author or divine authority of this book, either in the Jewish or Christian church; all allow that it was written by Solomon, and the general belief is, that he wrote the book by *Divine inspiration*.

“It has indeed been supposed that Solomon *collected* the major part of these proverbs from those who had preceded him. This opinion, however, has been controverted, as derogating from the authority of the book. But this supposition has very little weight; for whatever of truth is found among men, whether among heathen, or Hebrews, came originally from God; and if He employed an inspired man to collect those rays of light, and embody them for the use of His church, He has a right so to do, and to claim his own wherever found; and by giving it a *new authentication*, render it more useful in reference to the end for which it was originally communicated. God is the *Father of Lights*; and from him came all true wisdom, not only in its discursive teachings, but in all its detached maxims for the government and regulation of life.

“I think it very likely, (continues Dr. Clarke) that Solomon did not make them all; but he collected every thing of this kind within his reach; and what was according to the Spirit of truth, by which he was inspired, he condensed in this book; and as the Divine Spirit gave it, so the providence of God has preserved it for the use of His church.

“That Solomon could have borrowed little from his predecessors is evident from this consideration, that all uninspired ethic writers, who are famous in

history, *lived after his time.*” “It is impossible,” continues the author just quoted, “for any description of persons to read the book of Proverbs without profit. Kings and courtiers, (and all statesmen,) as well as those engaged in trade, commerce, agriculture, and the humblest walks of life, may here read lessons of instruction for the regulation of their conduct in their various and respective circumstances. Fathers, mothers, husbands, wives, sons, daughters, masters, and servants may here also learn their respective duties ; and the most excellent rules are laid down, not only in reference to morality, but also as it respects civil policy and economy.

“Many motives are employed by the wise man to accomplish the end at which he aims : motives derived from honor, interest, love, fear, natural affection, and piety toward God. The principal object he has in view is, to inspire a deep reverence for God, fear of his judgments, and an ardent love for wisdom and virtue. He exhibits injustice, impiety, profligacy, idleness, imprudence, drunkenness, and almost every vice, in such lively colors as to render every man ashamed of them who has any true respect for his interest, honor, character, or for himself. And as there is nothing so directly calculated to ruin young men as bad company, debauch, and irregular connexions, he labors to fortify his disciple with the most convincing reasons against all these vices, and especially against indolence, dissipation and lewdness. Maxims to regulate life

*See a long list of these, in Dr. Clarke’s preface to the book of Nehemiah, and the times in which they lived.

in all the conditions already mentioned, and to prevent the evils already described, are laid down so copiously, clearly, impressively, and in such variety, that every man who wishes to be instructed, may take what he chooses, and among multitudes, those which he likes best.”—*Dr. A. Clarke.*

“The Proverbs of Solomon,” says Mr. Watson, “on account of their intrinsic merit, as well as the rank and renown of their author, would be received with submissive deference. The first nine chapters are highly poetical, and are adorned with many distinguished graces and figures of expression. On these accounts they would rapidly spread through every part of the Jewish territory. The pious instructions of the king would be listened to with the attention and respect they deserve, and no doubt would be carefully recorded by a people attached to his person, and holding his wisdom in the highest admiration.”

The propriety of the remarks last quoted, will appear, when we consider the exceeding high value that is set on poetical compositions, and on works of genius generally; and if the people of those ages were impressed with the idea that the author of the book in question was divinely inspired, we may well suppose that their reverence for it, and for all others of a similar character, would be unbounded. To say nothing of the respect which is paid to the Alcoran of Mahommed by his countrymen and followers, we ourselves know in what estimation works of intrinsic merit are held. Would it be impossible at this day for any person to forge a Declaration of Independence and a Constitution like ours, and

impose them upon the people of Canada? Just as impossible would it be for any one, at any period, to forge any one of the books of Holy Scripture. And what if the author's real name be not known in every case, does that detract from their value? Are the "Letters of *Junius*" less esteemed because we know not by whom they were written, or were the Waverly novels less authentic because "the great unknown" was not "well known?"

But the Proverbs of Solomon, even if his name had not been affixed to them, commend themselves to our notice as the inspired words of God: they are adapted to all ages, all countries, all nations, whatever may be their form of government; they are venerable for their antiquity, but have not grown old and obselete with years, but like the pure, unadulterated gold, in whatever country it may be found, and wherever coined, is gold still, so these divine maxims, into whatever language they may be translated, will always prove themselves to be of eastern origin, and from the mines of Palestine. Nor does it lessen their value, that the illustrious author violated his own rules in after years; for though after his shameful departure from God, "they brought his Proverbs to confute his life," he never recanted the doctrines he had already taught, nor did the nation abandon them; but there they stand to this day—an imperishable monument of their author's wisdom—an everlasting reproof of his subsequent folly.

THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES.

“It is generally thought that this book was written by Solomon, toward the close of his splendid career, and after he had been brought to repent of his awful apostacy from God. The purpose of this book is explicitly declared in its title ; namely, to demonstrate the vanity of all earthly acquisitions, and to show that when the heart is set on sublunary enjoyments, all will prove to be ‘vanity and vexation of spirit.’ In the course of his argument, the inspired teacher anticipates the objections of the licentious and the thoughtless, and produces their absurd opinions for the purpose of refuting them. It is therefore necessary to keep the eye steadily fixed on the purport of the discourse, and to discriminate what the author delivers in his own, and what in an assumed character.” (See chap. xi. 9, and notes thereon.)

Another theory concerning this book may be found in the Wesleyan Methodist Magazine, for October, 1834. It is from the pen of the Rev. Isaac Keeling, a most charming and sagacious writer. After some preliminary remarks, Mr. Keeling observes,—

“Writers who, in other instances, have shown a hazardous disposition to build aspiring and expanding superstructures, on narrow and shallow foundations ; like the old half-timbered houses, which, by means of projecting beams were made wider at each successive story, from the ground upward, till the highest rooms fearfully overhung the street ; have

boldly decided concerning scriptural facts, dates, and doctrines, on the frail evidence of obscure and doubtful etymologies; they have also denied Solomon to be the author of Ecclesiastes, on the ground that the Hebrew of the original is mixed with Chaldaisms and Syriaisms, and contains some foreign words.

“But before the captivity, the time of Solomon was that, above all others, in which he had the most extensive intercourse with foreigners. Syria, subdued by David, was a part of his dominions. Among the members of his household, were seven hundred gentile princesses. Numerous foreign ambassadors and potentates visited Jerusalem on his account. (1 Kings iv. 34.) The foreign commerce of the Jews, in Solomon’s time, was more extensive than at any subsequent period. And it is surely not very extraordinary that foreign wives, foreign princesses, foreign commerce, and a continued influx of foreigners of rank, who came to converse with Solomon, should have some influence on the language of that age, and on the writings of the monarch himself. Taking into the account all the circumstances of Solomon’s reign, and the remarks which the writer makes in the book under consideration, there appears nothing wanting but the mere mention of his name in the book itself, to place the fact of his being the writer, beyond the possibility of doubt.

“In the plan of this book, Solomon appears to have been influenced by an opinion similar to what has been expressed by the late Mr. Burke, who says, ‘I am convinced that the method of teaching which approaches most nearly to the method of investiga-

tion, is incomparably the best ; since, not content with serving up a few barren and lifeless truths, it leads us to the stock on which they grew ; it tends to set the reader himself in the track of invention, and to direct him into those paths in which the author has made his own discoveries, if he should be so happy as to have made any that are valuable.'

"In presenting to us the results of his extensive experience and observation, Solomon also lays open his method of investigation ; not for the purpose of directing us into the same paths, but to warn us from a track so thoroughly explored, and so full of danger and disappointment. He intimates that his examination had been so complete as to preclude the necessity of any re-examination by persons of inferior opportunities ; for what can the man do that cometh after the king ? Even that which hath been already done. (Chap. ii. 12.)

"The book is an ample treatise, in a very concise style, on *two* great conclusions, at which Solomon had arrived by the road of persevering experimental inquiry. The *first* is, that whoever seeks his principal satisfaction, or his chief good in temporal possessions, pleasures, and pursuits, though he should possess all conceivable advantages for the execution of his plan, will be totally and miserably disappointed. His *second* great conclusion is, that though a good man may suffer many temporal evils and vexations, and though a wicked man may live and prosper, notwithstanding his crimes ; yet this is absolutely certain, that in the end 'it shall be well with them that fear God ;' but 'it shall not be well with the wicked ;' and that the chief good of man is

to be found in fearing God and keeping his commandments ;' 'for God will bring every thing into judgment, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.'

"The treatise on these points is presented in the interesting form in which the matter of it grew up in the writer's mind, as an important and essential part of his personal history. He makes us the companions and partakers of his thoughts, experiments, and emotions ; and takes us with him from the beginning to the end of his investigation. He informs us that he was at first encouraged to attempt so vast a series of experiments, by the consideration that he had eminent qualifications for trying all the varieties of worldly joy, and for judging of all he tried. He avows his great object to 'see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life.' (Chapter ii. 3.) His disposition being highly voluptuous, and insatiably inquisitive, co-operated with his design. He gave his heart to seek and search out by wisdom, concerning all things that are done under heaven ; and he withheld not his heart from any joy. He confesses that, in his search for the chief good, he tried not only the probable and promising sources, but, for the greater practical certainty, he also proved the unlikely and unpromising, such as mirth, wine, madness, and folly, as well as wisdom, but that he tried them for the ends of wisdom, and his wisdom remained with him ; in his wanderings he still kept in sight the grand aim of his investigation, and retained both the desire and the ability to judge aright of all which he experimentally examined.

“There is one excellence in the style of thought and expression in this work of Solomon, which very much resembles a peculiar feature in the writings of St. Paul. Both the royal preacher and the apostle of the gentiles, first state and assert the truth strongly, and afterwards strongly limit and guard it. They lay down general maxims with a free and comprehensive fullness. They argue with a power, brilliance, and kindling vehemence which resemble the fire and force of lightning. But with all this amplitude and energy in the statement and enforcement of general truth, they show a watchful recollection of details; an advertence to all reasonable exceptions, limits, and precautions; a judge-like sobriety, impartiality, and circumspection, which are quite as extraordinary as their force and grandeur; and are very rarely united with views so vast, and eloquence so impressive.

“Inattention to the *general scope* of these inspired penmen has been combined with another fertile source of misconstruction, namely, the extensive influence which the partisans of monastic austerity and seclusion exercised for more than a thousand years over the majority of Scripture readers and interpreters.

“Those partizans found in the writings of St. Paul some commendations of a single life, as suitable and convenient during the hazards of extensive and continued persecution; and forthwith they assumed a general excellence and merit in *celibacy*; entirely overlooking Paul's limitation of the advice to seasons of persecution; and his prophetic reference to the corruptions of a later age, in which he

classes the forbidding to marry among the doctrines of devils.

“In a similar manner have misconceptions of the doctrine of the royal preacher been produced and perpetuated. The monastic views of christian holiness having had the ascendancy in schools, colleges, and pulpits, during so long a course of ages, still tinge the opinions and prejudices of many religious persons of various churches, to a degree of which the individuals themselves are often unconscious. Those who refused to distinguish between the use and abuse of temporal things, and who were for sending believers to the hermitage, the monastery, or the desert, as the only scenes in which christians could be kept unspotted from the world, were equally disposed, by the same sweeping precipitance of judgment, to assume that Solomon, in his repeated declarations of the vanity of worldly schemes of happiness, was altogether of their mind. But when they found that in the same book a temperate and thankful use and enjoyment of the bounty of Providence was not only not reprobated, but actually recommended, their reluctance to admit that the voice of inspiration could be against them, stimulated them to invent the theory, that such passages were inserted as the observations of a worldly character, whom they supposed to be holding debate with the Preacher, pleading the uncertainty of the invisible and future state of man, and advising to make the most of present advantages, as the only ascertained realities.”

This latter opinion, as to the structure of this book, seems worthy of regard, from the considera-

tion, that in other parts of the Holy Scripture, when the inspired writers introduce the words of an objector, they generally premonish us of it ; as for example, when the words of an atheist are introduced, they are exhibited as the words of a *fool*—"the fool hath said in his heart, there is no God." (Ps. xiv. 1.) So also, when the objections of an unbeliever in the resurrection of the dead are brought forward, the Apostle warns us beforehand by saying, "But some man will say, how are the dead raised up?" &c. (1 Cor. xv. 35.) On this latter theory, therefore, "the supposition of a second speaker in this book is gratuitous."

THE SONG OF SOLOMON.

Great diversity of sentiment prevails among critics and commentators relative to the character of this poem. The majority consider it as an inspired book, while others regard it as a merely human composition : some regard it as a sacred allegory, shadowing forth the intimate relation between Christ and his church, something like the forty-fifth Psalm ; but others say it should only be regarded in its literal meaning, as referring to the marriage of Solomon with the princess of Egypt. Nor are those who concur in viewing it as a mystical allegory, agreed as to its precise meaning. Bishop Lowth restricts it to the universal church, and conceives that it has no reference whatever to the spiritual states of individuals ; while others interpret it as referring to the individual members who compose that church.

It is astonishing to see what influence creeds have upon the interpretation of this book. Good Dr. Gill, a high toned Calvinist, thought that it concerned Christ and the elect only, and for the comfort of the elect, preached one hundred and twenty-two sermons on it; while Dr. A. Clarke, a conscientious Arminian, who was of a widely different opinion, advised ministers, and especially young ministers, never to meddle with it, in the way of preaching. Amidst this conflict of opinion, supported as each is, by the highest names for piety and talents, it is extremely difficult to decide on the right.

That Solomon was the author of this poem, is affirmed by the concurrent testimony of both the Jewish and Christian churches. He is also mentioned as its author in the poem itself, (ver. 1); and the several allusions to his works and character, fix it indubitably to the period of his reign. That it is an inspired composition has been *inferred* from its finding a place in the Hebrew canon, and its translation into the Septuagint version.

But in opposition to this opinion, Whiston, the translator of Josephus, has endeavored to disprove its divine authority from a passage in which that Jewish writer gives an account of the divisions of their books, being *twenty-two* in number, instead of *twenty-four*, as at present. His words are, ‘We have only *twenty-two* books which are deservedly believed to be of divine authority, of which *five* are the laws of Moses. The prophets who were the successors of Moses, have written *thirteen*. The remaining four contain hymns to God, and docu-

ments of life for the use of men. These *four* seem to be, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes.

Probably the Jews, out of veneration to the author, and from a desire of preserving so striking a model of the marriage union, as well as from the fact that the covenant of God with their fathers was often symbolized by the figure of the marriage union, took the liberty to append it to their sacred books. It does not appear that either Christ or his apostles ever quoted it; and if we are to judge of its inspiration by the tenor of St. Paul's words (2 Tim. iii. 16,) it is difficult to perceive wherein it is "profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, or for instruction in righteousness, &c." unless it be by way of *allegory*, for the true understanding of which we still want the key of an inspired apostle, or of the Master himself. The fact that the Jews did not suffer their children to read it until they were *thirty* years of age, and the assertions of Christian ministers, that 'It is impossible that a natural or unconverted man, should understand this book,' if they have any weight in them, seem to say that it should have been bound up with those of the *Apocrypha*, rather than among those which are esteemed canonical.

LECTURE IV.

ON THE PROPHETICAL BOOKS.

“For prophecy came not in old time by the will of man ; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”

“THIS division of the books of the Old Testament is called *prophetical*, because the subjects thereof are chiefly, though not exclusively, of that character.

“If we take up the prophetic part of the divine volume, we find that it really distinguishes itself into two parts, which may be called the moral or doctrinal, and the predictive. It is not a series of mere predictions,—far from it—it abounds in matter of another kind ; the continued strain of moral doctrine, which runs through it ; that doctrine which is founded upon a knowledge of God, his attributes and his will, with a sense of man’s direct, personal, and responsible relation to Him. Accordingly, the most frequent subjects of the prophets are the laws of God ; his supreme dominion ; his universal providence ; the majesty of his character ; spirituality of

his being ; and holiness of his nature ; together with the obligations of obedience to him, in the particular duties of an inward faith and worship ; and of justice and mercy to man ; the whole of which duties are enforced by explicit sanctions of reward and punishment. These original principles of piety and morals, overspread the pages of the books of prophecy ; they are brought forward—they are inculcated from first to last—they are often the subject when nothing future is in question ; they are constantly interwoven with the predictions ; they are either the very thing propounded, or connected with it ; and all the way they are impressed with a distinctness and energy of instruction, which show that it was none of the secondary ends of the prophet's mission to be the teacher of righteousness ; inasmuch that if we except the Gospel itself, there can no where be shown so much of luminous and decisive information concerning the unity, providence, mercy, and moral government of God, and man's duty founded upon His will, as is to be gathered from the prophetic volume.

“ It may further be remarked, that this moral revelation, made by the succession of prophets, holds an intermediate place between the law of Moses and the Gospel itself. It is a step in progress beyond the law, in respect of the greater distinctness and fulness of some of its doctrines and precepts ; it is a more perfect exposition of the principles of personal holiness and virtue ; its sanctions have less of an exclusive reference to temporal promises, and incline more to evangelical ; the ritual of the law begins to be discountenanced by it ; the superior

value of the moral commandment to be enforced ; and altogether it bears a more spiritual and a more instructive character, than the original law given by Moses. In a word, there is in the prophets a more luminous rule of faith, than in the primary law ; and therefore God's moral revelation was progressive. It is more perfect in the prophets than in the law ; more perfect in the gospel than in either.

“ The prophets, in addition to their communication of doctrine and delivering of predictions, had another and a practical office to discharge, as pastors and ministerial monitors of the people of God. To show the house of Jacob their transgressions, and the people of Israel their sins, was a part of the commission they received. Hence their work to admonish and reprove ; to arraign for every ruling sin, to blow the trumpet to repentance, and shake the terrors of the divine judgments over a guilty land. Often did they bear the message of consolation or pardon ; rarely, if ever, of public approbation and praise. The integrity and fortitude with which they acquitted themselves of this charge, is attested by impartial history, which recites the death and martyrdom which some of them endured. But it lives also in their own writings ; not in the praise of their sincerity and zeal, but in the faithful record of the expostulations and reproofs which they delivered in the face of idolatrous or oppressive kings, a degenerate priesthood, and a corrupt and idolatrous people. ‘ Great was the fidelity and great the boldness of the prophets,’ is their just panegyric. But in this service they betray none of the spirit of turbulent and fanatical agitators, men who step out

of order to make the public sin their field of triumph; but a grave and masculine severity, which bespeaks their entire soberness of mind, and argues the reality of their commission. Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, are all eminent examples of this ministerial duty. And if St. Paul could say of Holy Writ, that it was ‘profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,’ as he speaks of the Old Testament, so to no part of it does that idea more fitly belong than to the admonitory homilies of the prophets.”—*Davison’s Discourses on Prophecy*.

“The great object of prophecy was a description of the Messiah and of his kingdom. The particulars of these were gradually unfolded by successive prophets, in prophecies more and more distinct. They were at first held forth in general promises; they were afterwards described by figures, and shadowed forth under types and allusive institutions. Persons, places, and things were also typical of good things to come, as David, Jerusalem, the Temple, &c. Many of the descriptions of the prophets had a twofold character, bearing often an immediate reference to present circumstances, and yet being in their nature predictive of future occurrences. What they reported of the types was after, in a most signal manner, applicable to the thing typified; what they spoke literally of the present, was figuratively descriptive of future particulars; and what was applied in a figurative sense to existing persons, was actually characteristic of their distant archetypes.

Many passages, then, in the Old Testament, which in their first aspect appear to be historical, are in

fact prophetic, and are so cited in the New Testament, not by way of ordinary accommodation, or casual coincidence, but as intentionally predictive, as having a double sense, a literal and mystical interpretation. This mode of wrapping up religious truth in allegory, gives great interest to the sacred books, in the diligent perusal of which, the most admirable contrivance and unexpected beauty will be discovered. That many of the prophecies in the Old Testament were direct, and singly and exclusively applicable to, and accomplished in Christ, is certain. But that this typical kind of prophecy was likewise employed, is evident from a number of passages. And it is this double character of prophecy which occasions those unexpected transitions, and sudden interchange of circumstance, so observable in the prophetic books. Thus different predictions are sometimes blended and mixed together; temporal and spiritual deliverances are foretold in one prophecy, and greater and smaller events are combined in one point of view. To unravel this requires much attention, and a considerable acquaintance with the scope of Scriptures.”—(See Davison’s Discourses on Prophecy, and Dr. Clarke’s notes on 34th and 35th of Isaiah.)

“The language of the prophets is remarkable for its magnificence. Each writer is distinguished for peculiar beauties. The ornaments of the prophetic style are derived, not from accumulation of epithet, or labored harmony, but from the real grandeur of its images, and the majestic force of its expressions. Its sudden bursts of eloquence; its earnest warmth; its affecting exhortations and ap-

peals, afford very interesting proofs of that vivid impression, and of that inspired conviction under which the prophets wrote. No style, perhaps, is so highly figurative as that of the prophets. Every object of nature and art, which can furnish allusions, is explored with industry; every scene of creation, and every page of science seems to have unfolded its rich varieties to the sacred writers, who, in the spirit of eastern poetry, delight in every kind of metaphorical embellishment." (See Dr. Clarke's preface to Isaiah.)

"Among the numerous evidences of the truth of the Bible, that of *prophecy* stands in the first rank, in point of importance. Its fulfilment is a standing miracle, attested to the senses of men in every age of the world. Verified in the accomplishment of its predictions, it attests the authentic inspiration by which it was given. It supplies that evidence which the enemies of religion, or those who are weak in the faith, would require, which applies to the present time, and which stands not in need of any testimony—which is always attainable by the researches of the inquisitive, and often obvious to the notice of all—and which, past, present, and coming events alike unite in verifying; it affords increasing evidence, and receives additional attestations in each succeeding age.

"That the prophecies of scripture were not written *after* the events predicted, many facts, in the present state of the world, abundantly prove, and independently of external testimony, the prophecies themselves bear intrinsic marks of their antiquity and truth. Of the *antiquity* of the scriptures, there

is the amplest proof. The books of the Old Testament were essential to the constitution of the Jewish state ; they contain their moral and their civil law, and their history, as well as the prophecies of which they were the records and the guardians. Many parts of these books were proved to be *ancient* 1800 years ago. Instead of being secluded from observation, they were translated into Greek above 250 years before the Christian era. The five books of Moses were preserved by the Samaritans, who were at enmity with the Jews, and the *antiquity* and *authenticity* of them rest so little on Christian testimony alone, that it is from the records of our enemies that they are confirmed, and from which is derived the evidence of our faith.

“Of all the attributes of the God of the universe, his *foreknowledge* of the actions of free and intelligent agents, is the most incomprehensible. It has bewildered and baffled, most of all, the powers of human conception ; and an evidence of the exercise of this perfection in the revelation of what the infinite mind alone could make known, is the seal of God, which can never be counterfeited. If the prophecies of the scripture can be proved to be genuine, no clearer testimony, or greater assurance of the truth can be given ; and if men do not believe Moses and the prophets, neither would they be persuaded though one rose from the dead. Even if one were to rise from the dead, *evidence* of the fact must precede *conviction* ; and if the mind be satisfied of the truth of prophecy, the result in either case is the same. The voice of Omnipotence alone could call the dead from the tomb—the voice of Omniscience

alone could tell all that lay hid in futurity, which to man is as impenetrable as the mansions of the dead—and both are alike the voice of God.”—*Keith on the Prophecies.*

When we take up the volume of well authenticated history, and look back upon ages past, we put ourselves in possession of the knowledge of facts, which we never could have known with any degree of certainty in any other way, but of the truth of which, when once related in a candid manner, and especially if corroborated by the testimony of contemporary historians, the voice of uninterrupted tradition, and attestation of existing monuments, we feel fully satisfied. We have only to transfer ourselves two or three thousand years back, and take up the volume of inspired prophecy, and we have the history of the world, so to speak, in another form, with this difference—one is the word of man, and may, or may not, be correct; the other is the word of God, and must be correct.

History informs us of the past; prophecy of the future. History tells us what has been; prophecy, what shall yet be. History makes us acquainted with the venerable dead; prophecy, with those who have not yet begun to live. History is in general more plain, prophecy more obscure, with respect to those things which to us are yet future; but where we have the key of history to unlock the book of prophecy, all is plain; the word of prophecy confirms the truth of history, and the testimony of history proves the truth of prophecy. Take for example the testimony of M. Volney, a reputed infidel. He says of ancient TYRE, “It was the thea-

tre of an immense commerce and navigation—the nursery of arts and sciences, and the city of perhaps the most active and industrious people ever known.” What is it now? “The site of ancient Tyre,” says Volney, “is no more.” Doubtless the voice of impartial history taught him to say this of Tyre, but who taught the prophet to say, “They shall lay thy stones, and thy timber, and thy dust, in the midst of the water,—thou shalt be sought for, yet thou shalt never be found again.” (Ezekiel, xxiv. 12, 21.)

There was another Tyre, also, which was built on an island, about half a mile from the site of the former, “whose merchants were princes, whose traffickers were of the honorable of the earth,” and of whom it was said, “I will make thee like the top of a rock. Thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon,” which prediction is repeated with an assurance of its truth:—“I will make her like the top of a rock; it shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea, for I have spoken it.” These are the words of the *prophet*. (Ezekiel xxvi. 14, 15.) The words of the *historian*, (Volney’s Travels, vol. 2, p. 212,) are, “The whole village of Tyre contains only fifty or sixty poor families, who live obscurely on the produce of their little ground, and a trifling fishery. The houses they occupy are no longer, as in the time of Strabo, edifices of three or four stories high—but wretched huts, ready to crumble into ruins.” *Thus, from the testimony of an unbeliever, we prove the truth of Scripture.*

The prophecies respecting Egypt, viewed in connection with its former greatness, and the testimony

of unbelievers, is still more striking. Think of “one of the most ancient, and one of the mightiest of kingdoms, whither the researches of the traveller are still directed, to explore the unparalleled memorials of its power. No nation, whether of ancient or modern times, has ever erected such great and durable monuments.” Remember, “while the vestiges of other ancient monarchies can hardly be found amid the mouldered ruins of their cities, those artificial mountains, visible at the distance of thirty miles, *the pyramids of Egypt, are still standing* and have stood, unimpaired, amid all the ravages of time. Yet the knowledge of all its greatness and all its glory, about which there can be no dispute, while it was yet a flourishing kingdom, did not deter the Jewish prophets from declaring that Egypt would become *a base kingdom, and never exalt itself any more among the nations.* (Ezekiel, xxx. 6. 13.—Zechariah, x. 11.) These predictions, it must be remarked, were uttered *before* Egypt became subject to the Persians. The progress of her “decline” is thus stated by Volney—“Deprived, twenty-three centuries ago, of her natural proprietors, she has seen her fertile fields successively a prey to the Persians, the Macedonians, the Romans, the Greeks, the Arabs, the Georgians, and the Turks. The Mamelukes, purchased as slaves, and introduced as soldiers, soon usurped the power, and elected a leader. If their first establishment was a singular event, their continuance is not less extraordinary. They are replaced by slaves *brought from their original country.* The system of oppression is methodical. Every thing the traveller sees or hears reminds him he is in the coun-

try of slavery and tyranny." (Volney's Travels, vol. 1, p. 75—198.)

"A more unjust and absurd constitution cannot be devised than that which condemns the natives of a country to perpetual servitude, under the arbitrary dominion of *strangers* and slaves. Yet such has been the state of Egypt above five hundred years. The most illustrious sultans were themselves promoted from the Tartar and Circassian bands; and the four-and-twenty beys, or military chiefs, have ever been succeeded, not by their sons, but by their servants."

These are the words of the men who could scoff at the christian religion, while they were, undesignedly, no doubt, confirming its truth. The *prophet* says, "I will lay the land waste and all that is therein, by the hand of strangers. I the Lord have spoken it—And there shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt.—The sceptre of Egypt shall depart away—it shall be the basest of kingdoms." The words of the *historian* are, "Every thing the traveller sees or hears reminds him he is in the country of slavery and tyranny. A universal air of misery, manifest in all the traveller meets, points out to him the rapacity of oppression, and the distrust attendant upon slavery. The profound ignorance of the inhabitants equally prevents them from perceiving the causes of their evils, or applying the remedies."

"Such prophecies, accomplished in such a manner, prove, without a comment, that they must be the revelation of the Omniscient Ruler of the universe." (*Keith on the Prophecies*, p. 244.)

Whoever will be at the pains to examine his Bible, will find therein predictions concerning the sons of Noah—the posterity of Jacob, the tribes of Israel—the Babylonish captivity, and the destruction of Jerusalem—the birth of Josiah—the work of Cyrus—the desolations of Judea—the destruction of Nineveh, Babylon, and Tyre—the ruin of Egypt—the victories of Alexander—the conquests of the Romans, and the present condition of the Jews. But as the “testimony of Jesus was the spirit of prophecy,” and as “to Him gave all the prophets witness,” we shall find the prophecies concerning him more numerous, and more circumstantial than all the rest. Here, in the “sure word of prophecy,” his coming is foretold—his forerunner is pointed out—the nation, tribe, and family, from whence he was to descend, are noted—the place of his birth is marked—his character is particularly described—his work pointed out—the treatment he should meet with—the sufferings he should endure—his behaviour in the time of suffering—his death, burial, resurrection, and ascension, are all predicted, as also many other particulars respecting him, and the fate of his doctrine in the world.

The *unbeliever*, without doubt, will find occasion, either in the prophecies themselves, or in the book in which they are contained; or rather from the perverseness of his own spirit, to object to these sacred oracles; but as one has well observed, “Let *him*, or any sceptical reader, meditate thoroughly and soberly upon these predictions. The priority of the records to the events predicted, admits of no question. The fulfilment of many of these pre-

dictions is obvious to every competent inquirer. Here then are facts,—things predicted, and predictions fulfilled. How are these to be accounted for? Is human foresight, enthusiasm, conjecture, chance, political contrivance, or, we might add, priestly craft, equal to the task? If none of these, neither can any other principle that may be devised, account for them; then true philosophy, as well as true religion, will ascribe them to the agency and inspiration of the Almighty.”—(*Watson.*)

If it should be asked, “Why were these prophecies given?” it may be replied, “They were given as a necessary means of keeping up religion and faith in a fallen world. Sinful man could have no hope—no reasonable hope of pardon and restoration, without the promise of a Redeemer. Prophecy is nothing else than this promise gradually developed and confirmed. The prophecies, therefore, were the object and test of faith—they furnished a sure ground of hope, and were calculated to excite gratitude and love.” Let us take an example from the first promise of a Redeemer, given to our first parents, soon after the fall. What was the design of this? Was it not to them “an intimation that God was displeased with the tempter, and that the punishment inflicted on him was a restoration granted to themselves; and that the human nature which the serpent had afflicted, should, in the end, have the honor and the satisfaction of winning the victory, and trampling on the foe?”

“The mingled light and shade of prophetic vision are here conspicuous; the prediction was a light—its influence would be cheering; it would guide those

who gave heed to it in the way of hope and of life. But it was a light shining in a dark place; it did not clear up all the gloom; it did not reveal all the prospect of the future; much uncertainty still remained; and the light which glimmered before them, would show them sorrow and suffering, as well as hope and immortality; the seed of the woman, though victorious, was destined to suffer from the malice of the serpent; the poison was to rankle in his flesh before the fangs of the dragon could be broken; and bitter enmity between the race of the woman and the seed of the serpent, was the portion, meanwhile, of suffering man, as well as of the degraded reptile. Enough of good was revealed, to encourage hope, and to be a foundation of religion; but not enough to abolish sorrow, the fruit of sin, nor to open the future fully to mortal man, which God alone can perfectly foresee. Had there been no hope, there could have been no religion; for a religion without hope would be phrenzy and despair. Had there been an entire revelation of the future, that dependance and faith, and the discharge of present duty, and humility, which become a sinner, might have lost their principal excitement."

"Another intention of prophecy was to prepare the minds of men for that method of recovery which was to be effected by Jesus Christ. This was its first announcement—this is its great and final consummation. It was the spirit of Christ, which, in the ancient seers, testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. The redemption of the world was the great object of the divine dispensations; and it was an object so

gracious on the part of God, so animating to the hopes of man, and yet so much exceeding all possible expectation, that the Lord God of the holy prophets sent and signified to his servants these great things which should one day be brought to pass.

“As has been observed before, the great object of prophecy was a description of the Messiah, and of his kingdom. But no one of all the prophets has foretold with such distinctness and particularity the advent and death of Him who was given for *salvation to the ends of the earth*, as Isaiah. His prophecies concerning the Messiah seem almost to anticipate the gospel history. Hence he has obtained the designation of *the evangelical prophet*. The divine character of Christ—his miracles—his peculiar qualities, and virtues—his rejection—sufferings, death, burial, and victory over the grave—his final glory, and the establishment, increase, perfection, and perpetuity of his kingdom, are each specifically pointed out, and portrayed with the most striking and discriminating characters.”

“Finally, prophecy was designed, when accomplished, to furnish a body of evidence for its own divinity. The accomplishment of the predictions which foretold the desolations of Babylon, Tyre, Nineveh, Egypt, and Jerusalem, proves that that power which foretold them was divine. The clear, and subsequently fulfilled predictions of Isaiah, for example, place his inspiration and authority beyond all doubt. It is impossible, indeed, to reflect on these, and on the whole chain of his illustrious prophecies, to say nothing of the rest, and not be sensible that they present the most incontestible evidence

in support of Christianity.”—(*C. B. Volume IV. page 581.*)

Some prophecies, no doubt, remain to be fulfilled. But every one which has received the seal of confirmation from Providence and history, is a voucher for the truth of those which yet remain to be accomplished. It was necessary, in some instances, as when the prophecy was intended to have a practical effect, that the terms in which it was couched, should be plain and unequivocal. At other times, *in order to excite expectation*, it was expedient that the prediction should be clothed in language somewhat obscure, yet in every respect suitable to the dignity of the subject; were it otherwise, they might become the subject of collusion and imposture, because, in certain circumstances, it might be the policy or interest of men to endeavor to fulfil them. And in this case, “the gradual and slow developement of the prophetic scheme was like the slow and imperceptible process which we see in the unfolding of a flower. First of all, it is a mere germ, destitute of beauty, and wrapt up in a state of entire concealment. No man can guess what shall be its shape, or its color, or its fragrance. All that we know of this bud of promise is, that it shall one day be unfolded, and that the skill of its author shall then most indubitably appear. Meanwhile, days and nights gently open its outward covering; its petals begin to disclose a pale hue of beauty, and the eye which sees it to-morrow, shall know more of its future character and shape, than the eye which looked on it yesterday. Still, nothing but time, and the genial sun-beam, can fully open and explain the

beauties and the fragrance of the unfolded bud. Time shall expand its secret leaves to the light, and expansion shall display in their fair and divine proportions, all its several parts; and then that unformed and shapeless mass, which no eye could penetrate and no finger could unfold, shall, of itself, stand forth to the admiration of all men, a blossom of surpassing sweetness. The men of ancient times saw only the promise of the expanded bud; it was reserved for the ages of the gospel to behold and taste the excellence of the full blown flower. Let us call to mind the dimness and obscurity attendant upon the first promise; and then look at the precision and the light of the predictions recorded by Daniel. The prophetic word was at first as a light shining in a dark place; but now, as we journey onward, it waxes brighter and brighter, and will soon shine unto the perfect day.”—(*C. B. Vol. IV. p. 623.*)

Much of the obscurity which still remains upon many of the prophecies, might possibly be removed if we were more thoroughly acquainted with the structure of Hebrew poetry. For that many of the prophecies were composed in *verse*, there is no question. Nor is this to be wondered at, for as *poetry* ranks higher than *prose*, and no one can be a genuine poet unless by the special gift of God, it was meet that the sublimest of all the divine communications to man, should be clothed in words suitable to the highest degree of inspiration. Of the superiority of poetry, as an art, above history, painting, sculpture, music, &c., to perpetuate the memory of past events, every one who has read Mr. James Montgomery’s Lectures is fully aware, and to those who

have not, the following extract from Bishop Lowth on the sacred poetry of the Hebrews, may not be unacceptable.

“ The *prophetic office* had a most strict connection with the *poetic art*. They had one common name, one common origin, one common author—the Holy Spirit. Those in particular were called to the prophetic office who were previously conversant with sacred poetry. It was equally a part of their duty to compose verses for the service of the church, and to declare the oracles of God; it cannot, therefore, be doubted, that a great portion of the sacred hymns may properly be termed prophecies, or that many prophecies are in reality hymns or poems. (See particularly Psalm 45th.) Since, then, it was from the first a principal end and aim of poetry to impress upon the minds of men the sayings of the wise, and such precepts as related either to the principles of faith, or the laws of morality, as well as to transmit the same to posterity, it ought not to appear extraordinary that *prophecy*, which in this view ranks as a principal, and is of the highest importance, should not disdain the assistance of an art so admirably calculated to effect its purposes. Of this we have an illustrious proof in that prophetic ode of Moses, which he composed by the especial command of God, to be learned by the Israelites, and committed to memory: ‘That this song may be,’ says God himself, ‘for a witness against the people of Israel, when they shall depart from me; this shall be a testimony in their mouths; for it shall not be forgotten, nor shall it depart out of the mouths of their posterity for ever.’” (Deut. xxxi. 19—21.)

“This species of poetry is more ornamented, more splendid, and more florid than any other. It abounds more in imagery, or at least in that species of imagery which, in the parabolic style, is of common and established acceptation, and which, by means of a settled analogy always preserved, is transferred from certain and definite objects to express indefinite and general ideas. Of all the images proper to the parabolic style, it most frequently introduces those which are taken from natural objects and from sacred history: it abounds most in metaphors, allegories, comparisons, and even in copious and diffuse descriptions. It possesses all that genuine enthusiasm, which is the natural attendant on inspiration; it excels in the brightness of imagination, and in clearness and energy of diction, and consequently rises to an uncommon pitch of sublimity: hence, also, it often is very happy in the expression and delineation of the passions, though more commonly employed in the exciting of them; this indeed is its immediate object, over which it presides as its peculiar province.” (*C. B., Vol. IV. p. 231.*)

Every one who has read the Bible with any degree of attention, has observed a great difference in the composition and style of the different books; and though there is among the prophets a greater similarity than among other sacred writers, yet every one has his peculiar gift of God, and that peculiarity which marks the style his own. As a minute detail of the contents of each of the prophetic books is not strictly necessary, now we have them in possession, a few brief notices of the

history of each prophet, accompanied with characteristic remarks on the style of each writer, will close this lecture.

ISAIAH. "Of this distinguished prophet, our information is extremely scanty and uncertain. He is supposed to have been of the tribe of Judah, and of the royal family of David; his father being understood to be that Amos who was the son of Joash, and brother of Amaziah, kings of Judah. He prophesied during four reigns—in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, (ch. i. 1.) It is generally supposed that his ministry extended to the reign of Manasseh, by whom it is believed he was put to a violent death, by being 'sawn asunder.' (Hebrews, xi. 37.) Isaiah evidently prophesied for a great length of time: the most probable opinion seems to be that which extends it to sixty years. He was a married man, and had two sons, whose names were typical. (Chap. vii. 3, and viii. 3.) His wife was called a prophetess. (Chap. viii. 3.) He has always been regarded as a prophet of the highest eminence, and has been looked up to as one of the brightest luminaries of the Jewish church. (*C. B. Vol. IV. p. 580.*)

"His style is lofty and elegant; his metaphors and illustrations are noble, and suitable to the dignity of the subjects of which he treats. Collectively viewed, his poetry forms the greatest tablet, both of awfully solemn and joyfully beautiful conceptions, ever exhibited in poetical prediction. He is far from surpassing all the Hebrew poets in individual passages; but in his fullness, force, majesty, and

propriety, he comprehends more excellencies of the poetical character than any one of them. The 34th and 35th chapters may be selected as a specimen of this prophet's style—these two chapters form a simple, regular, and perfect poem. But the 14th chapter of his prophecies affords the grandest specimen of his poetic power, presenting one of the sublimest odes in the Bible, and marked by the boldest personifications to be found in the whole range of poetry.”—(*Bishop Lowth.*)

It might be considered impertinent, if not sacrilegious, to compare the Hebrew poets, who were divinely inspired, with the poets of our own language; but if it be correct to say, “Moses is the Homer of the Bible,” why may we not say that the translator of Homer bears some resemblance to Isaiah, his favorite Hebrew bard; or, to reverse it, that Isaiah, among the Hebrew poets, occupies the same rank as Pope among the English. It is remarked by Dr. Watts, that “there is scarcely a happy combination of words, or a phrase poetically elegant in the English language, which Pope has not inserted in his version of Homer.” Dr. Johnson calls it “a poetical wonder”—“a performance which no age can pretend to equal.” Miss H. More calls Pope “that eternal embellisher of common sense, common life, and just thinking; whose every line is a maxim or a portrait.” This is saying a great deal for merely human compositions; but after all, perhaps more might be said, if we were only capable of judging, in favor of the bard of Palestine, whose thoughts, images, and metaphors might be found to exceed those of uninspired poets as far as the fruits of a

tropical clime are found to exceed those of the temperate zones. Whether these remarks are just or not, one thing we know, to use the words of one of the great critics above quoted, in accommodation to the subject, if by the christian *the poets* are read “with frequent astonishment,” *the prophets* may be read “with perpetual delight.”

JEREMIAH. “This prophet was of the tribe of Benjamin, and was called to the prophetic office at a very early age. He entered upon it about seventy years after the death of Isaiah, and exercised it about forty-two years, with great zeal and fidelity. He was of the sacerdotal race, being one of the priests who dwelt at Anathoth, in the land of Benjamin. On being called to exercise the prophetic office, Jeremiah modestly endeavored to excuse himself, by pleading his youth and incapacity; but being overruled by the Divine authority, he applied himself to the duties of his function with unremitted diligence and faithfulness. This was about the thirteenth year of Josiah’s reign. He met with great opposition from his countrymen, whose welfare lay so near his heart, that their bitterest opposition could not hinder him from sharing their fortunes, whether in exile or at home.

“His style is beautiful and tender to a high degree; especially when he has occasion to excite the softer passions of grief and pity, which is often the case in the first parts of his prophecy. It is also on many occasions very elegant and sublime, especially towards the end, where he somewhat resem-

bles Isaiah." (*See Clarke.*) He was the Cowper of his day.

EZEKIEL. "This prophet was the son of Buzi, of the sacerdotal race ; (chap. i. 3,) and was carried captive into Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, with Jeconiah, king of Judah, and three thousand other captives of the principal inhabitants. He was sent into Mesopotamia, where he received the prophetic gift, after he had been in captivity five years. He continued to prophecy about twenty-two years."—(*Dr. Clarke.*)

Bishop Lowth says of Ezekiel, "He is inferior to Jeremiah in *elegance*, but equal to Isaiah in *sublimity*, though in a different species of the sublime. He is bold, vehement, tragical, and deals very much in amplification. His sentiments are lofty, animated, poignant, and full of indignation. His images are fertile and magnificent, though sometimes rather indelicate. His diction is grand, weighty, austere, rough, and sometimes uncultivated ; and in force, impetuosity, weight, and grandeur, no writer ever equalled him."

Perhaps the same may be said of Ezekiel's prophecy as was said of Young's Night Thoughts,—“It is a wilderness of thought, in which the fertility of fancy scatters flowers of every hue and of every odour ; and in the whole there is a magnificence like that ascribed to a Chinese plantation, the magnificence of vast extent and endless diversity.”—(*Johnson.*)

DANIEL "Is said to have descended from the

royal family of David ; and appears to have been carried into Babylon when very young, during the reign of Jehoiakim, king of Judah. He appears to have been instructed in all the wisdom of the Chaldeans, which was, at that time, very great, and he was soon distinguished in the Babylonish court, as well for his wisdom and strong understanding, as for his deep and steady piety.”—(*Dr. Clarke.*)

He was the Shakspeare of his day, with these differences—his tragedies were *real*, and his histories were written *before* the events, instead of *after* ; and his language was as *pure* as his thoughts were *elevated*.

HOSEA. “ This prophet lived in the kingdom of Samaria ; and his prophecies, for the most part, relate to the ten tribes. As a writer, he is concise, sententious, abrupt, and often very obscure, though he is sometimes highly animated and occasionally sublime.”—(*Dr. Clarke.*)

If some of his images are, to our eyes and ears indelicate, they show, at least, that he lived among a people awfully corrupt. The last chapter, however, makes amends for all. No one can read it as he ought, without profit.

JOEL, “ The son of Pethuel, was, as is supposed, of the tribe of Reuben, and cotemporary with Hosea. His language is elegant, perspicuous, clear, diffusive, and flowing ; and, at the same time, animated, nervous, and sublime. The first two chapters are inimitably beautiful ; and the language well adapted to the subject.”—(*Dr. Clarke.*)

AMOS. In the order of time, this prophet was before Hosea, and cotemporary with Jonah. He was from the humblest walks of life, but it is well observed, that “the same heavenly spirit which inspired Isaiah and Daniel in the palace, inspired David and Amos in their shepherd’s tents; at one time *using* the eloquence of some; at another time *making* others eloquent, to subserve his great purposes.”—(*See Dr. Clarke’s preface and notes.*)

OBADIAH. Very little is known of this prophet. He prophesied against Edom, and his prophecies have been literally fulfilled. And he must be a very hardened sinner who cannot learn a lesson of *moral-ity* from the 12th and 13th verses of this prophecy.

JONAH. “Our Saviour makes frequent mention of this prophet, from which we may conclude,—
1. That there was such a person. 2. That he was swallowed by a sea monster. 3. That he preached to the Ninevites, and that they turned from their evil ways, and obtained mercy at the hand of their offended God. In point of time, he was before Hosea.”—(*See Clarke’s notes on this book.*)

MICAH. “This prophet has something of the dramatic style. He is sometimes peculiarly grand and graceful. And for *sublime* and *impressive* diction in several places, he is unrivalled. The Lord’s controversy (chap. vi. 1—8,) is equal to any thing even in Isaiah. He was cotemporary with Hosea.

NAHUM. “This prophet lived after the time of

JONAH. He prophesied of the destruction of Nineveh, As a writer, he is ranked among the most classically poetical of all the minor Prophets, and superior to them all in boldness, ardor, and sublimity.”—(*See Clarke and Bishop Newton on this prophecy.*)

HABAKKUK. “This prophet was probably of the tribe of Simeon, and was cotemporary with Jeremiah. As a poet, he holds a high rank among the Hebrew prophets. His hymn (chap. iii.) is allowed by the best judges to be a model of Lyrical sublimity, and one of the most perfect specimens of that class of compositions.”—(*See Dr. Clarke and Bishop Lowth.*)

ZEPHANIAH prophesied in the days of Josiah, king of Judah. As a poet, he deals much in amplification. (chap. i. 14—16.) Two of his expressions, or phrases, have become almost proverbial among religious people. (Chap. i. 12.)

HAGGAI. He was probably born in Babylon, during the captivity, and was one of the first sent to comfort and encourage the Jews in rebuilding Jerusalem. The spirit of prophecy and of poetry, by this time, manifestly declined—the period of visions draws towards its conclusion—and the words of Micah, ‘*The sun shall go down over the prophets,*’ (chap. iii. 6,) begin to be most affectingly fulfilled.

ZECHARIAH “Returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel, and began to prophesy two months after

Haggai. He is the longest (*the most lengthy*) and the most obscure of all the minor prophets. His style is interrupted and without connexion. But his prophecies concerning Christ are more particular and express than those of the other prophets of his time." The light of prophecy was now like that of an almost expiring lamp, or of a flickering taper, which often brightens just as it is about to expire.

MALACHI. This is the last of the Jewish prophets. Not only the spirit of Hebrew poetry, but even the elegance of their language, was now on the decline. In a few years, they both expired. Malachi however, notwithstanding this, spoke clearly of the coming of the Messiah, and of his forerunner, John the Baptist. (Chap. iii. 1 ; iv. 5.)

LECTURE V.

ON THE DIVINE INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES.

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.”—
2 Tim. iii. 15.

As the writings of the New Testament are so well known, it is thought unnecessary in this place to give a description of them ; but we will now enter more particularly upon the question of the Divine inspiration of the whole Bible.

1. It will not be denied, that the whole nation of the Jews, from the time of Moses to the time of Christ, believed in the divine inspiration of their sacred books ; and it must be confessed that they had greater opportunities of satisfying themselves of the truth of this, than any unbeliever at this day has of proving the contrary. We therefore fearlessly assert that such a belief obtained in the time of our Saviour, that it was well founded, and that it is impossible for any one to prove that the scriptures of the Old Testament were not divinely inspired. Suppose, for example, what no one can deny, that these books were in ex-

istence in the time of Christ, and that in them were contained prophecies respecting his birth, ministry, miracles, and death ; who will be so bold as to deny that these predictions were given by inspiration of God ? The Jews indeed refused to apply them to Christ, but this was no proof of their wisdom ; it was their sin, and their folly ; but though they were guilty in rejecting Christ, they never, as a nation, denied the inspiration of their sacred books.

2. It must be acknowledged that the whole Christian world, both Catholic and Protestant, and every sect among Protestants believe the same, and if the Protestants refuse to admit the divine inspiration of every book claimed to be canonical by the Catholics, this shows that they have examined the question thoroughly, and have not decided thereon, on slight and equivocal grounds. And if on the other hand, the Protestants profess a higher regard for the scriptures than for the authorities of the church, this proves that they believe in their divine authority and inspiration.

3. Among both Catholics and Protestants, there have not been wanting men of the profoundest erudition, who have examined this question with a diligence and patience of research, worthy of the highest praise. Witness the labors of Eusebius, Origen, Jerome, and a host of others, down to the time of Calmet ; and then add Grotius, Poole, Lightfoot, Whitby, and many others, down to the time of Paley, Townley, Horne, and Clarke.* How weak and

* See Dr. Clarke's general preface to his Commentary.

wicked it must be for a young philosopher just come from college, or any other man, unless he have more learning than all these put together, to deny the authenticity and inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, I need not say—the thing speaks for itself!

4. But let any one who has not the opportunity of examining such elaborate works as Townley's Biblical Literature, and Horne's Introduction to the critical study of the Sacred Scriptures, just furnish himself with Alexander on the Canon of Scripture, and Dick and Parry on Inspiration, two small volumes within the reach of almost every one, and he will find enough to confound his scepticism, if not to satisfy all his inquiries; or let him read the first part of Watson's Theological Institutes, or Newton, or Keith on the Prophecies, or Shuttleworth on the Consistency of Revelation, or Turner's Sacred History, or Faber's Difficulties of Infidelity, and he will find that Christians have not, for eighteen hundred years, "followed cunningly devised fables." But if in the absence of all these, he be disposed to look into the sacred volume itself, he will there find,

5. An agreement among the sacred writers themselves, which, considering the many authors employed, the different places and times in which they wrote, from the time of Moses until the time of St. John, that will truly astonish him. Let the very great number of facts recorded, and the particular circumstances of time, place, and persons mentioned be considered, and it will appear impossible that the Bible should be a forgery. Constant allusion and reference are made to facts and customs then existing, in every part of the book of God, which if the

Bible had been a forgery, would have been carefully left out. Things are said to have been done in the presence of witnesses, who never attempted to disprove them, and facts are stated, which, if they had not existed, would forever have discredited the writer, and brought eternal infamy upon his name. These things, in themselves considered, may not prove the Bible to be a volume of *divine truth*; but if we admit that they disprove the charge of *forgery*, and establish the claim of *authenticity*, then the fact of a *prediction* being interwoven with the narrative, and that prediction since fulfilled, the claim to Divine Inspiration is established.

6. The prophecies of the Old Testament anticipate the existence of the facts recorded in the New. In the New Testament it is recorded that Jesus opened the eyes of the blind,—in the Old Testament it was foretold that he should do so. “Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped; the lame man shall leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing.” This prediction was recorded by Isaiah many years before the coming of Christ. When, therefore, he opened the eyes of the blind, &c., he not only performed miracles, but the very miracles that had been foretold; and herein it is proved to demonstration, that the prophet was divinely inspired, and that Christ was no impostor, but the true Messiah, the Saviour of the world. If any one should deny the justness of this conclusion, let him show the fallacy of the reasoning. Where in the writings of George Fox or William Penn, can we find any thing like the predictions of Noah, Jacob,

and Moses, respecting the future condition of their people? and if not in the writings of good men, who professed to be led by the Spirit of God, much less in the writings of those who deny divine revelation, and scoff at the idea of inspiration. Let the unbeliever show us a book as old as the Pentateuch,—a merely human composition as popular and revered as that venerable document; let him point to the prediction, and the fulfilment, as clearly as we can to the prophecies of Moses, and to their exact fulfilment, and then we will admit that the objections against the inspiration of the Old Testament are well founded; but until that is done, the cause of revelation must prevail, and that of infidelity must be defeated.* [*See preceding Lecture, p. 130—133.*]

7. We might prove the inspiration of the prophets of the Old Testament by the miracles which they performed; but we are aware that this kind of evidence is liable to objection. The unbeliever, first, denies the possibility of a miracle; or if, secondly, he admit that the Author of nature can change the course of nature, or alter and suspend its laws, he demands to know that the account of miracles recorded in the Scriptures is authentic and correct. We admit that it is easy to deny and hard to prove some things, and harder still to convince those who are prejudiced against the truth, when that truth makes against their favorite system. But suppose that an annual festival were appointed in commemoration of the miracle, such as the festival of the Passover among the Jews, and that of Easter among Christians, would not the proof of the miracle be sufficiently clear and convincing? What proof

have we at this day, that our fathers landed at Plymouth, in December, 1620? It is said in Morse's Gazetteer, that "the rock on which the first settlers landed was conveyed, in 1774, from the shore to a square in the centre of the town, and the anniversary of their landing is still celebrated." Now if the words of Messrs. Morse are entitled to credit, so are those of Moses, and if the statements of the one are susceptible of proof, so are those of the other.

8. We might prove the divine inspiration of the Old Testament by the testimony of Christ and his apostles, and we know that this kind of proof is as satisfactory to the mind of an unprejudiced Christian, as the testimony of Plutarch is to the existence of such a man as Romulus, or to the exploits of an Alexander. But having to do with unbelievers, we are aware that they deny the authenticity and inspiration of the New Testament, and of course, all that is said there, is, by them, rejected. Still, however, one resource remains, which makes the difficulties of infidelity greater than its friends are apt to imagine. One thing is certain—we have a Bible! Whence came it? Who are its authors? Not Wesley, nor Calvin, nor Luther, nor Wiclif, nor Jerome, nor Origen. Thus far is certain. The authors of the New Testament are not the authors of the Old—this also is certain. Some parts of the Old Testament have been in existence more than 3,000 years, and the whole of it more than 2,000—this likewise is certain. Now who invented this wonderful book? Not wicked priests; for whoever it might be, the authors have been careful to say

‘It is the word of the Lord,’ and if they had been conscious of uttering falsehoods, while they testified that what they delivered was the word of the Lord, they would have been sagacious enough to have left out of its pages all those terrible denunciations which doom hypocrites and “all liars,” to an everlasting hell! It is equally certain that good men could not have imposed this book upon mankind as the word of the Lord, if it were nothing but their own invention, for they could not be good men if they uttered falsehoods all the time. It is therefore certain that the Old Testament was divinely inspired! One thing more also, is certain; Christianity exists, and has existed more than 1834 years, of which the present *Annus Domini* is a proof. Christ was born in Bethlehem, of which the festival called *Christmas*, is a proof. He was manifested to the Gentiles, of which the feast of the *Epiphany* is a proof. He fasted forty days, of which the season of *Lent* is a proof. He “suffered under Pontius Pilate,” of which *Passion week* is a proof. He “was crucified, dead and buried.” of which *Good Friday* is a proof. He “rose again from the dead,” of which *Easter* is a proof. And he sent down his Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, of which the festival called *Whitsuntide* is still a witness among us. For why are these days observed in the church of Christ? For the same reason that we observe the day when Washington was born, and the day of our national independence—to perpetuate the memory of the event. It follows, therefore, if these things are so, that Christianity is true, and if Christianity be true, then the testimony of Christ and of his apostles to the divine inspira-

tion of Moses and the prophets, is worthy of credit.

9. The inspiration of the New Testament, as well as that of the Old, may be argued from the *necessity of the case*, for,

“ Whence but from heaven, could men unskilled in arts,
In different nations born, in different parts,
Weave such agreeing truths? or how, or why
Should all conspire to cheat us with a lie?
Unasked their pains—ungrateful their advice,
Starving their gains, and martyrdom their price.”

It was necessary that the authors of the Bible should be divinely inspired, for there are many sublime truths contained in it, which it was important for man to know, but which he never could have found out, by the light of nature, or the efforts of his unassisted reason. What could the world have known concerning God, our relationship to him, and the duty we owe to him, without a special revelation from himself to us? As it is impossible for us to know the thoughts of each other's hearts, without a revelation of the same, so it is impossible to know the thoughts and purposes of God, without a revelation from himself. How does the unbeliever in divine revelation know whether there is one God or more? The wise Athenians of old could not settle this question! But suppose we say that reason teaches us that there is One Supreme; why then is not the same truth taught universally? Why do the children of nature, where art and priestcraft have never found their way, believe in such a multitude of gods? But suppose that this truth were univer-

sally believed, does reason teach us what is the character of the Supreme Being? What service will he accept, and how shall we worship him aright? In days of old there was one, as sacred history informs us, who believed in the existence of One Supreme Being, and yet he did not know how to worship him; therefore he asks, "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God; shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" (Micah vi. 6, 7.)

The words of Socrates in a conversation with Alcibiades, on the duties of religious worship, though not near so expressive as the above, are very remarkable, and are a standing proof of the weakness of human reason in its highest state of cultivation. When Alcibiades wished to know how the gods (*the gods*, observe) ought to be worshipped, Socrates replied, "to me it seems best to be quiet; for it is necessary to wait till we learn how we ought to behave towards the gods, and towards men."

Can unassisted reason know the thoughts and purposes of God toward man respecting his future destiny? If we admit that He is *unchangeable*, who can tell but the same ills may forever afflict us, that distress us here? Can the reason of an unbeliever satisfy him what will become of his immortal spirit when the body dies? (By the way, some men's reason, or philosophy, or something, teaches them

to deny the immateriality and immortality of the human soul—so sure it is that reason, if reason it be, is not uniform and impartial in her teachings.) Let us hear the words of the emperor Adrian, who, perhaps, “had his *hours*, if not his *age of reason*.” When dying, he addressed his soul as follows:—“*Animula, vagula,*” &c. &c.,—thus translated by Mr. Pope:—

“ Ah ! fleeting spirit ! wand’ring fire,
That long has warmed my tender breast,
Must thou no more this frame inspire ?
No more a pleasing, cheerful guest ?
Whither, ah ! whither art thou flying ?
To what dark, undiscover’d shore ?
Thou seem’st all trembling, shiv’ring, dying,
And wit and humor are no more ! ”

Very different to these are the words of a believer—“*To live is Christ, to die is gain*.” “I have a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.”

“Unassisted reason cannot prove the certainty of a future state, unless it can also prove that God is perfectly just ! But it cannot prove that God is perfectly just, unless it can also prove the certainty of future rewards and punishments, which, (as some men deny,) shows that reason must for ever argue in a circle, and can never arrive at correct conclusions.”—(*Faber*.)

The condition of man in the present life is a perfect enigma, and never can be explained without the aid of revelation. Look at him in his present condition—as lofty as an angel in intelligence, as sor-

did as a beast in appetite ; as elevated as an immaterial spirit in intellect, as abject as a worm in his physical condition. Behold the wretched outcast ! The elements are a source of terror to him. The earth, the air, the sea, are all filled with enemies ready to devour him. The vegetable, the animal, the mineral kingdoms, are full of poisons, lying in wait ready to destroy him ; and from among his fellow mortals, *his brethren*, there arise enemies in every direction, and at every turn. Here the *liar* stands ready to deceive him ; there the *assassin* ready to murder him. Here the thief avails himself of the darkness of the night, to rob him ; there the *knave* and the *slanderer* seek an opportunity to defraud him of his rights, and to blast his reputation. How is all this, if God is the common Father of us all, and we are brethren ? How is this, if there be no devil to ensnare, no hereditary depravity to impel us to these things ? Does reason teach these things, or is our nature corrupt ?

Some men say we are all born pure, and are corrupted by example ; but how could the first man or first woman be corrupted by example ? Some say that good things are apt to spoil, but this is not always the case, for gold does not spoil, even in the fire, nor does any other good thing spoil unless it come in contact with evil, or have the principle of decay within itself, and some things we know have within themselves the principles of their own purification ; how else is it that the air which we breathe, which is so often corrupted, becomes pure again ? How is it that reason does not keep pace with science ? and why is there not, by this time, as great

improvement in *morals* as in the arts? Men know a great deal more now than in the days of Cain, but it does not appear that they are a whit better where they have nothing but nature to govern them, and reason to guide them.

Let us here inquire how *death* could come into the world in which we live. To say that man was originally made subject to death, argues imperfection somewhere, and either his Maker could not, or would not, make him otherwise. To say that he could not, is to suppose that the Deity was wanting in power; to say that he would not, is to suppose him wanting in goodness. Here a fact stares us in the face—*man is subject to death!* But why is this? Could not his Maker prevent it, or would he not do it? For my own part, I never could find out any other reason why man should die, than that which is assigned in the Scriptures. If I could create a living animal, as beautiful and as intelligent as man, I am sure I should take no pleasure in destroying it; much less, to put it, and numberless millions of the same species, to indescribable pain, for the space of five thousand years in succession, *unless there were a sufficient cause!* Much less, could I, as a father, put all my children to death in the manner in which we human beings die; and what is still worse, subject them all their life time, to a bondage through fear of death, more cruel than death itself, *unless there were an adequate cause—a cause sufficient to justify the painful procedure.*

That offenders should be punished, is not so wonderful, and that their punishment should be in proportion to the magnitude of their offence, is not so

much a matter of surprise ; or, in other words, that notoriously wicked men should be cut off in the midst of their days, seems consistent with our ideas of justice, but that good and useful men should die in the very zenith of their glory and usefulness, and that it should be said of thousands, every year, of the most lovely of the human race, “ Her sun is gone down while it was yet day,” is matter of astonishment and wonder. And it is still more wonderful that innocent children, who have never offended or injured any one, or transgressed a known law in their brief and transitory life, should be cut off by millions in a year ; yes, it is enough to strike one dumb with astonishment ; and I protest, that reason with all her boasted powers, can never answer the question, ‘ *why is this ?* ’ but one line of Divine revelation settles the whole, and satisfies every doubt. “ By one man *sin* entered into the world, and *death* by sin.”

But if reason cannot discover why so much evil exists, neither can she point out a remedy. She can never tell how guilt may be forgiven—how inbred pollution may be washed away, and the victory gained over all our spiritual enemies. She cannot even answer this question, “ If a man die, shall he live again ? ” But here again revelation solves the anxious doubt, “ For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”

10. If inspiration was necessary in the case of the Holy Prophets, it was not less so in the case of the Apostles, for in their writings there are things revealed which the eye of reason had not seen, the ear of a philosopher never heard, and the heart of

an unbeliever never thought of; witness the sublime description of the last judgment, in the 25th chapter of Matthew—the arguments for, and the illustrations of the general resurrection in the 15th chapter of St. Paul's 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, or St. John's description of the New Jerusalem, in the 21st chapter of the Apocalypse. A modern philosopher would turn a “downright adorer” of Plato or Cicero, if he should find such sublime descriptions in their writings as are found in these three passages.

Some writers, who admit the inspiration of the *doctrinal and prophetical* parts of the New Testament deny the inspiration of the *Historical*, but a very slight attention to the *manner* in which these things are related, will convince the unprejudiced reader that the Evangelists wrote their narratives of the life of Christ “as they were moved thereto by the Holy Ghost.” For as one observes, “The Evangelists, in relating the history of Christ, have occasion to speak of the most astonishing facts;—his miraculous conception;—the wonders which he wrought in calming the fury of the winds and waves, raising the dead, casting out devils, and curing all sorts of diseases;—his transfiguration on the mount;—the preternatural eclipse of the sun at his death, the rending of the rocks, and the opening of the graves;—his resurrection from the dead, and his ascension into heaven. Might it not have been expected, that, in recording such events, they would have given vent to those feelings of admiration, which such things are so well calculated to awaken, and have described them in the most glowing expressions ?

The subject was interesting, and well fitted to produce those strong emotions which naturally communicate something of their own character to our language. Yet they are related in the most simple manner, without any note of admiration, without any comment, without any attempt to set them off, or recommend them to the attention of the reader. This mode of writing did not proceed from insensibility, which in their circumstances would have indicated a degree of callousness or torpor, that could only have resulted from absolute stupidity. They inform us, that they were astonished when they saw the miracles of Jesus, but they write of them without any expression of astonishment. How can their coolness be accounted for? Is it not a proof, that in writing their narratives they were guided by a different spirit from their own; that they wrote, not as they thought, and felt, themselves, but as they were directed by another, who kept their thoughts and feelings under control? The influence of the Holy Ghost is manifest in restraining them from mixing their own sentiments and passions with the relation, and in leading them to give a simple statement of facts without any embellishment, that our faith in Christ might rest entirely on the evidences of his divine dignity and mission, and might not, in any degree, be owing to human wisdom and eloquence.”—(*West on the Resurrection.*)

“Never did a person of such virtue as Jesus Christ appear in our world; never did virtue wear so amiable an aspect; never was it calculated to make so deep an impression on the heart. His character was at once perfect and attractive. His meek-

ness and gentleness, his affability and condescension, his patience, his benevolence, his generous love, diffused a soft and pleasing lustre over the severer virtues, which were displayed in his conduct. An ancient philosopher fondly imagined that if virtue were incarnate, all men would be charmed with her beauty. We might at least have expected that those who conversed with the Son of God, in whom, if I may be allowed the expression, virtue was embodied, would have been ravished beyond measure with his excellencies, and would have celebrated them in the warmest strains of commendation. In their narrative, indeed, the lovely features of his character are exhibited to the greatest advantage. But this is done by representing them in their native simplicity, without paint or decoration of any kind ; and the writers, while they give a full detail of his virtues, pass on without making a single reflection.

“ Never did any person deserve to meet with such good treatment as Jesus Christ ; and never was any person so harshly and cruelly used. His words were watched and misconstrued ; his most beneficent deeds were, by the malignity of his countrymen, transformed into crimes ; and evils of the blackest dye were laid to his charge. Was it not natural for disciples, faithful and affectionate, to enter with ardor into the cause of their Master, and to repel with indignation, calumnies which they knew to originate in malice ? Could we have been surprised, if their honest zeal had burst forth into vehement exclamation against the injustice of his accusers ; and laying aside the language of ceremony, which is indeed, in most cases, the language of

falsehood, had bestowed on them and their conduct names and epithets which we are sure they deserved? Yet they leave their master to vindicate himself; and even when he holds his peace, they trust his apology to the silent and irresistible eloquence of his conduct. They speak of his enemies with as much coolness as if they had done him no injury; and the dark shade of their actions is not deepened by a single stroke of their pencil.

“Never was there an event so astonishing as the death of Christ. The innocent have sometimes fallen victims to the injustice of this world, or to their own generosity. But who is this sufferer? Is he not greater than all men? Is he not the Creator of the universe; and does not all nature, accordingly, pay him homage in his sufferings. The most heroic love, therefore, is unworthy to be named with the love of Jesus. On this topic, the evangelists, full of admiration and gratitude, might have bestowed all the coloring of imagery, and all the riches of language. It was a topic more calculated than any other to gratify their own feelings, and to interest strangers in behalf of their Master. What tender and overpowering descriptions might they have given of his agonies! What melting and irresistible appeals might they have made to the heart! While the scene was yet fresh in their remembrance, and their own hearts were still bleeding with the wounds which his death had inflicted upon them, was it not natural to consecrate all their eloquence on a subject which must have seemed to them alone worthy of attention? Yet though they record his death, and attribute it to his

love, they neither give impassioned descriptions of the one, nor attempt to raise in our minds exalted ideas of the other. They leave us to the office of making such reflections as the subject suggests.

“This mode of writing indicates a very peculiar state of mind. It would be absurd to suppose that the writers had no feelings ; and no motive can be assigned for having intentionally suppressed them. An impostor would have avoided this appearance of indifference, which might have given rise to a suspicion, that he did not himself believe his own narrative. For the absence of all passion, we can only account by admitting that their minds were controlled by supernatural influence. Their own emotions and affections were suspended, that, during this interval of calm, the voice of the Divine Spirit might alone be heard. Such a history as that of Christ could not have been written but by inspired men.”—(*Dick on Inspiration.*)

“The more we reflect on the inimitable character of the gospel writers, the more we discover that they were not dictated by the spirit of man. These barely say, in a few words, that their Master was crucified, without discovering the least surprise, compassion, or acknowledgment. Who would have spoken in this manner of a friend that had laid down his life for him? What son would have related in so short, so unaffected a manner, how his father had saved him from death, by suffering in his stead? But it is in this that the finger of God appears conspicuous ; and the less man appears in relating a behaviour that has so little humanity in it, the more the operation of God is manifest.

“The prophets describe Christ’s sufferings in a lively, affecting, and pathetic manner, and abound with sentiments and reflections ; but the evangelists relate them with simplicity, without emotion or reflections ; without breaking out into admiration or testimonies of gratitude ; or discovering the least design to work in such a manner upon their readers as to make them disciples of Christ. It was not natural that persons who lived so many years before Christ, should be so touched with his sufferings ; nor that men who were eye witnesses of his cross, and so zealous for his glory, should speak with so much calmness of the unheard of crime that was perpetrated against him. The strong zeal and affection of the apostles might have been suspected, which that of the prophets could not be. But had they not both been inspired, the evangelists would have written with greater force and fire, and the prophets with more coldness and indifference ; the one would have shown a desire to persuade, and the other such a timidity and hesitation in their conjectures, as would not have affected any one. All the prophets are ardent, zealous, full of respect and veneration for the mysteries they publish ; but as for the evangelists, they are calm ; and are masters of an inimitable moderation, though their zeal is as strong as that of the prophets.

“What man but sees the hand which guided both the one and the other ? And what more sensible proof can we have of the divinity of the Scriptures, than their not resembling, in any particular, such things as are written by men ? It is much in the same manner that Moses relates that Abraham laid

Isaac on the wood which was to be his funeral pile, without telling us one word that was spoken either by the father or the son, and without preparing us for such a sacrifice by any reflections, or telling us in what manner the father and son submitted to it. Josephus, the historian, puts a pretty long, but very beautiful and moving discourse into Abraham's mouth; but Moses describes him as silent, and is himself silent on that occasion. The reason of this is, the former wrote as a man, and as his genius prompted him; whereas the other was the pen and instrument of the word of God, who dictated all his words."—(*Rollin on the eloquence of the Sacred writings.*)

“Waiving all farther proof for the present, of the inspiration of the apostles, let us now notice the manner in which they speak of the writings of the Old Testament. Their language is as follows: ‘For whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope.’ ‘All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to all good works.’ This last text having been differently translated, deserves particular attention; for Paul, say some, does not mean to affirm that all parts of what we call the Old Testament, were given by inspiration. He only means that such parts as were given by inspiration, were profitable. They read the text thus,—‘All Scripture given by inspiration of God, is profitable,’ and so on; or thus, ‘ev-

ery writing divinely inspired,' &c. Admitting the correctness of this translation, what is gained by it? What did St. Paul consider Scripture? Of what did he affirm that it 'was profitable for doctrine,' &c.? Omitting the question of the inspiration of Solomon's Songs, which is discussed in another place, was it not the whole of the Jewish Scriptures of which he was here speaking? and the question returns, What did he consider Scripture? Did he mean a verse, a chapter, a book, or parts of several books? He was writing a letter of advice to a young Christian minister, of whom he asserts that, 'From a child he had known the holy Scriptures.' All which Scriptures, so known to Timothy, he declares were 'given by inspiration of God, and were able to make him wise unto salvation,' &c. Now whatever might be the knowledge of Paul, how could Timothy understand him? It is not likely that any very nice distinctions were made by his instructors. They had no index to point out unimportant parts; no society to direct them how to read; no large lettered paragraphs to be carefully read, and small type to be carelessly glanced at. They instructed him in the sacred writings of the Jews; and his worthy and pious relatives probably did not know—certainly would not teach him that learned questions had been started, at sundry times, and in divers manners, concerning a verse, a section, or a chapter. The oracles of God—'*the lively oracles*,' as St. Stephen terms them, (Acts vii. 38,) were committed to them, and they made him acquainted with their contents. In the scriptures of the Old Testament, considered by the Jews canonical, had

Timothy been instructed ; and of these St. Paul affirms they were given by inspiration of God !

“ But leaving Timothy and his tutors out of the question, St. Paul’s notions concerning the Scriptures may be known by the use which he makes of them. Observe, first, the nature of his quotations. The Scriptures given by inspiration of God, he declares to be profitable for doctrine, and for this purpose he uses the history of Isaac and Ishmael. ‘ Now we brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise ; but as then, he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless, what saith the Scripture ? ’ &c. Again, he makes the same use of a part of the history of Elijah. ‘ Wot ye not what the Scripture saith of Elias ? How he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, &c. But what saith the answer of God unto him, ’ &c. So also the history of Jacob and Esau is made to serve a doctrinal purpose.

“ There is, however, a more remarkable passage in the Epistle to the Corinthians. Paul maintains his right to a maintenance, although he consents to waive that right ; and in support of his claim, he says, ‘ For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen, or saith he it altogether for our sakes ? for our sakes, no doubt, this is written, ’ &c. Thus much for ‘ doctrine ; ’ for ‘ reproof and correction, ’ he refers the Corinthians to the children of Israel in the wilderness, and for ‘ instruction in righteousness, ’ Abra-

ham is held up as an example—‘He staggered not at the promise of God, but was fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able to perform, and therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.’

“Many more passages might be selected, of the same character; but here we may pause, and ask, Could St. Paul write in this way, without being fully persuaded that all the Old Testament was given by divine inspiration? In like manner, he quotes or refers to the books of Moses; to Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Job, the Psalms, the Proverbs, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, never intimating that one book was of *divine* authority, another of *human*, another of *questionable*, and another of *no authority* at all—never intimating that one part was of less importance or authority than another, but using them as his argument, or exhortation required. Would he, an inspired apostle, have thus mixed up ‘wood, hay, and stubble,’ with ‘gold, silver, and precious stones?’ Would he have allowed the colossus which he had reared, to stand with one foot on a rock and the other on the sand? No, he esteemed it all alike, solid rock, against which the gates of hell should not prevail.”

“But St. Paul, a Jew, a Pharisee, acquainted with the Jewish Scriptures, and with the commentaries on those Scriptures, acquainted also with the opinions of his countrymen, with whom he was debating the point in a serious and sober manner, quotes indifferently from the whole—intermixes the

raptures of Isaiah with the maxims of Solomon,—the laws of Moses with the Psalms of David,—the loftiest poetry, with the simplest history, argues alike from the law and the prophets, introducing his quotation with ‘one in a certain place testifieth’—‘as he saith also in another place,’ &c. All this is perfectly natural—is strictly proper—if St. Paul believed that whoever was the writer, the Holy Ghost was the real author,—if he considered the ground sacred wherever he trod! But if any parts were viewed by him as peculiarly sacred, while others were of doubtful origin, his conduct cannot be accounted for on ordinary principles. He was every moment in danger of defeat, and must be chargeable with misleading honest and well-meaning disciples. The conclusion therefore is, and ought to be, that Paul could not be mistaken; that his character of the Old Testament must be correct, and that he meant to affirm, without qualification or reservation, that, whatever was found in the Jewish canonical Scriptures, was given by inspiration of God.”—(*C. B. Vol. IV. p. 490.*)

12. A very important argument for the inspiration of the Scriptures, Jewish and Christian, is found in the circumstance of their almost miraculous preservation.

“It is now more than three thousand years since the first of these sacred books, and nearly two thousand since the last of them was written; and yet not one of them, if even a single sentence of them, has been lost. Very ancient books, it must be acknowledged, have come down to us through a long succession of ages; but their

case, when attentively considered, will appear to be very different from those of the Scriptures. Against those books no person conceived any ill will, but on the contrary cherished a superstitious veneration for them; nor did any man feel himself interested in suppressing them, because they neither contradicted his prejudices, nor opposed any obstacle to the gratification of his passions, and the success of his schemes; whereas kings and emperors, both before and since the coming of Christ, have been the determined enemies of the Scriptures, and have employed all their authority, and the utmost severity of persecution to accomplish their destruction. Beside, the lusts of men have, in all ages, been at war with the Scriptures; and the patrons of heresies and errors have experienced them to be the chief impediment to the progress and triumph of their opinions. But for the Scriptures, the world would have been overrun with error, and not a single root or grain of truth would have been found. A book which pronounced the wisdom of the world to be folly, treated its most serious and important pursuits as childish and criminal, and branded with the odious name of vice its favorite indulgences, was likely to be proscribed with indignation, and persecuted with unrelenting revenge.

“Amidst so many enemies, we could not have been surprised if the Bible had shared the fate of many other books, once venerated and reputed divine, which have long since disappeared. Surely, had it been the work of man, its memorial must have perished from the earth. But of its preservation amidst the dangers which threatened it, we ourselves

are witnesses. With whatever earnestness multitudes may have wished to destroy a book which thwarted their measures, and disturbed them in the practice of iniquity, few have been so daring as to lay their hands upon it; those who have been guilty of this sacrilegious attempt, have been disappointed in their hopes whether they aimed at its total destruction or the adulteration of its contents; and it remains to this day an object of veneration and dread to the very men whose errors it condemns, and against whose evil ways it denounces the righteous vengeance of heaven.

“Notwithstanding the triumph of Arianism, we still meet with all those passages which were ever alleged to prove the equality of the Son with the Father; and though for several ages Antichrist reigned in the plenitude of his power, and enjoyed the most favorable opportunities, amidst the gross ignorance and unsuspecting credulity of mankind, to corrupt the Scriptures, we are able from them alone, without the aid of the writings of the fathers, to convict the church of Rome of apostacy, and to prove its peculiar doctrines and usages to be false and superstitious. Not one jot or one tittle of revelation hath perished.”—(*Dick on Inspiration.*)

“It is apparent,” says Dr. Owen, “that God in all ages hath had a great regard for the Bible, and exerted his power and care in its preservation. Were it not what it pretends to be, there had been nothing more suitable to the nature of God, and more becoming Divine Providence, than long since to have blotted it out of the world. For to suffer a book to be in the world, from the beginning al-

most, falsely pretending his name and authority, seducing so great a portion of mankind into a pernicious and ruinous apostacy from Him, as it must do and doth, if it be not of divine original, and exposing inconceivable multitudes of the best, wisest, and soberest among them unto all sorts of bloody miseries which they have undergone in behalf of it, seems not so consonant unto that infinite goodness, wisdom and care wherewith this world is governed from above. But on the contrary, whereas the malicious craft of Satan, and the prevalent power and rage of mankind hath combined, and been set at work to the ruin and utter suppression of this book, proceeding sometimes so far that there seemed no possible way of its escape; yet through the watchful care and providence of God, sometimes putting itself forth in miraculous instances, it hath been preserved unto this day, and shall be so to the consummation of all things."

Let these general arguments for the inspiration of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament be well digested and thoroughly examined, giving to every single remark all the weight of which it is worthy, tracing it to its utmost consequences; bearing in mind also, the character of the penmen—the excellence of the doctrines—the style, and the language—the ten thousand allusions to existing facts in surrounding nations—the imagery employed, evidently borrowed from the regions of Palestine, and the remote ages of antiquity—the historical, geographical, and geological situation of the earth—the physical and moral condition of man—the present condition of the Jews, the Ishmaelites, and the

children of Ham—the uninterrupted voice of tradition—the testimony of ancient heathen writers to the facts recorded in Scripture—the occasional testimony of infidels to the morality of the New Testament—the undesigned testimony of infidel historians to the truth of the Old Testament prophecies; and last, but not least, *the experience, holy lives, and happy deaths of the firmest believers*, and a volume of evidence will be found to exist, which never can be set aside, overturned, or disproved.

LECTURE VI.

THE WISDOM OF BELIEVING.

*“Thou, through thy commandments, hast made me wiser than mine enemies ; for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers ; for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.”—*Psalm cxix. 98—100.

IN nothing do the friends and enemies of divine revelation differ more than in their definitions of true wisdom. The authors of the book of Job, and of the Psalms, and of the Proverbs, (Job xxviii. 28 ; Psalm cxi. 10 ; Prov. ix. 10,) all assert that “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,” while Voltaire and his associates as fearlessly assert that “The fear of God, so far from being the beginning of wisdom, is the beginning of folly.” Christ hesitates not to charge his disciples with folly when they show a reluctance to believe all that the prophets have spoken. (Luke xxiv. 25.) And infidels are as ready to charge Christians with folly when they show a readiness in believing the same things.

Paul, in his day, assures us that the heathens who professed themselves wise above what was written, or revealed, were fools for so doing. (Rom. i. 22.) And on the other hand, philosophers, as they call themselves, are as bold in declaring that all who believe in the Scriptures are guilty of the greatest folly. It is, without doubt, an affectation of wisdom, on the part of unbelievers, when they reject the Scriptures, that they do so because they think it is unreasonable and absurd to suppose that they are a revelation from God.

Now, whatever their ideas may be of the character of God, and of what ought to be the character of a revelation coming from him, it is presumable that they who believe in a God, and in the possibility of a revelation, will agree in this, that in what he has been pleased to reveal, be it more or less, there is that to be found which is more calculated to make men wise, than in that which is merely the offspring of their own imagination ; and that it is wiser to believe what God has revealed, than it is to disbelieve it. It will probably be admitted, on the supposition that God has made a revelation of his will to man, that it is a duty we owe to him, to believe it, rather than to disbelieve it, and that we are more likely to do honor to him, and to ourselves, in receiving his word, than in rejecting it.

Some of the evidences of the divine authenticity and inspiration of the Holy Scriptures have already been brought forward, and many more might be enumerated, if need required ; but as these lectures are not intended to supersede the necessity of consulting larger works on this subject, but are rather

intended to direct the attention of the reader to those works, suffice it to say, "If the evidences of the truth of the things contained in the Holy Scriptures, and particularly of the certainty of everlasting happiness after death, were more numerous and strong, good men might be led to disregard and neglect the common duties of life ; and if the evidences of the truth of Christianity were more convincing than they are, the moral agency of bad men might be destroyed thereby, and the purifying influence of faith and hope would no longer be felt. But if these evidences rise to such a mediocrity as to render men virtuous by receiving, and vicious by rejecting them, they highly accord with the moral government of God, and the free agency of man. Perhaps, for this reason, as in the works of nature and providence, so in the works of grace, the Deity conceals himself partly from our view, that we may become wise and virtuous by constant endeavors to trace out his perfections."—(*Sutcliffe.*)

One of the most prominent and most tremendous annunciations of the gospel is, "He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." Now how can the Almighty be just in consigning a human being to everlasting torments for disbelieving his holy gospel, if it be not possible for him to believe it, or if there be no folly in rejecting it? Surely a God of mercy cannot be unjust ; since, therefore, he has set the terms of man's salvation, and requires him to believe, in order to be saved, it is not becoming in unbelievers to affect a *reason* for their disbelief of the gospel, nor is it binding on Christians to show the *reasonableness* of their faith. They may do it if they please, as a

matter of courtesy, but they are subject to the same terms and conditions as the infidel; the same law applies to both, "He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." Now what wisdom is there in running the risk of losing our souls, merely for the pleasure of turning Christianity into ridicule?

Here is a book professing to contain the "law of the Lord." One, who had meditated therein day and night, exclaims, "O how I love thy law." Another who has only looked into it with a jaundiced eye, cries out, "O how I hate it." But supposing thousands of competent judges to have examined the evidences of the divine authority of this book, and to have pronounced it a genuine work, is he an honest man who rejects it on slight and equivocal grounds? Is he just to himself and to others, to disregard the voice of Him that speaks to him from heaven? The *honesty* of an unbeliever I shall not now question; but the *wisdom* of rejecting the word of the Lord, I utterly deny; while, on the other hand, the wisdom of receiving it as "the engrafted word which is able to save the soul," I hope to make apparent.

Are you an *unlearned* man? There is more information contained in the first three chapters of Genesis, concerning the creation of all things—the original condition of man—his shameful fall—and the origin of all evil, than you will find in so short a compass, in any other book in the world. There is more solid information in the Bible than in any other book. There is that which you will find in no other book whatever—that which will "make

you wise unto salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus." All learning is not knowledge. There are those that are "ever learning, yet never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." When you take up such a work as Homer's *Illiad*, and particularly Pope's Homer, beautiful as it is, you do not know that the author speaks truth. You read of the siege of Troy, but you do not know that these things were so. But when you take up the Saviour's prediction of the siege of Jerusalem, and compare it with Josephus' history of that event, you can come at the knowledge of the truth in the case. When you read Milton's *Paradise Lost*, sublime and beautiful as it may be in poetry, you do not know but it may be false in fact; but when you read the sacred narrative of our Saviour's discourses and miracles, you may know that these things were so. All knowledge is not wisdom. We may be very knowing, and, at the same time, very unwise; but whoever will follow the maxims of the Old Testament, and the precepts of the New, cannot be unwise—therefore there is wisdom in believing.

Are you a *learned* man, a linguist, an antiquarian, a historian, a philosopher, a poet, a statesman, a grammarian, a logician, a rhetorician, a traveller? Here you may gratify your taste as a *linguist*, in comparing manuscripts, in noticing the structure, genius, and idiom of many languages, for the Bible exists in many. Here you may notice paraphrases, versions, and various readings, *ad libitum*, if not *ad infinitum*. Here you may indulge your speculations on the origin of nations, and of languages, and with

the *antiquarian*, travel through Rome and Greece, into Egypt, and learn the origin of almost all the mythological fables of the ancients. Here, if you love to trace *history* to its fountains, you may go farther back than the days of Hesiod, or of Homer, and obtain certain information of cities and of nations that have long since gone to decay. Here, if you are a *philosopher*, you may find entertainment in some parts, at least, of the writings of Moses, or of Job, or of David. (See Gen. i. 14; Job xxxviii. 22; Psal. cxxxv. 7.) What think you of that expression of Job's, (chap. xxvi. 7,) "He hangeth the earth upon nothing," philosophically considered? And of that of the psalmist, (Psal. xxxiii. 7,) "He gathereth the waters of the sea together as a heap," in view of the convexity of the sea, and the modern theory of tides? Or of those expressions of Solomon, (Ecc. xii. 6,) "Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel be broken at the cistern?" Most interpreters agree that Solomon, in this beautiful allegory, is speaking of the human system. How then can the blood in the human body, "ascend without reluctance, and descend without precipitancy," as one observes, "contrary to the common laws of nature?" And how could Solomon describe these things as he has done, without some knowledge of the principles of modern science?

Here, if you are a *poet*, you may gather flowers as rich as ever grew on Mount Parnassus. To be convinced of this, you need only read Bishop Lowth on Isaiah, Dr. A. Clarke's notes on the Psalms, and

his sketch of the life and character of David ; or “ The Song of Moses, explained according to the rules of rhetoric,” by Rollin, in the 2d book of his method of studying the belles lettres. “ Every one,” says this elegant writer, “ knows the energy with which the Scriptures make the impious man to vanish, who a moment before seemed, like the cedar, to raise his proud head to the skies. Thus, for example, (Ps. xxxvii. 35, 36,) ‘ *I have seen the wicked in great power ; spreading himself like a green bay tree ; yet he passed away, and lo, he was not ; yea I sought him, but he could not be found.*’ He is so completely annihilated, that the very place where he stood was destroyed. Racine gives a different translation, which is thus Englished :

‘ I’ve seen the impious wretch adored on earth,
And, like the cedar, hide his daring front
High in the heavens. He seem’d to rule at will
The forked thunder, and to crush his captives :—
I only past, and lo ! he was no more !’ ”

Are you a *statesman* ? look again at the laws of Moses, and the characters of Joseph, Joshua, Samuel and Daniel. We often hear of corruption in ministers of state. Here are instances of unsullied integrity. “ Behold here I am,” says Samuel, “ witness against me before the Lord, and before his annointed : whose ox have I taken ? or whose ass have I taken ? or whom have I defrauded ? whom have I oppressed ? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith ? and I will restore it unto you.”

Are you a *grammarian*, a *logician*, a *rhetorician*? have you a passion for the recondite in philology? then, with Gerard's elements of Biblical Criticism in one hand, and a Polyglott Bible in the other, you may find entertainment "till life's sun shall set." The *simplicity* and *grandeur* of scripture style is above all praise. Notice the simplicity of the following passage, "He made the stars also." Here the sacred historian speaks with indifference of the most astonishing display of Omnipotence imaginable! Think of the creation of millions of suns, systems, worlds! The act was God's—the manner of relating it worthy of himself. "Those who study the Scriptures attentively," says Rollin, "find that the beauty consists in the strength and greatness of the thoughts. Almost all writers on the sublime have noticed that passage in Genesis where Moses speaks of the creation of light. God said, 'Let light be, and light was.' Where was it a moment before? How could it spring from darkness? from nothing? The world that had hitherto been plunged in darkness, seemed to issue a second time from nothing; and every thing, by being enlightened, was beautified. In an instant, all the colors that spring from light embellished all nature. How magnificent is that description of the Psalmist—'*O Lord my God, thou art become exceeding glorious; thou art clothed with majesty and honor—thou deckest thyself with light, as it were with a garment.*' One would almost think that the God of ages had clothed himself with magnificence, and that issuing from the secret of his pavilion, he displayed himself in light. But all this is but his outward clothing, and as a

mantle which hides him. Thy majesty, O God! is infinitely above the light that surrounds it: I fix my eyes on thy garments, not being able to fix them on thyself."

Are you a *traveller*, or fond of reading books of travels? Here then, you may visit Egypt in the time of the Pharaohs, when the art of embalming was in its glory, when the pyramids, probably, were raised;—certainly when the firstborn were slain by the angel of the Lord. From thence you may visit Palestine, Syria, Greece, Chaldea, Italy and Spain, and as you travel through those countries in the Book of God, you may notice the constant allusion to places and things, and manners and customs peculiar only to those countries, which will convince you, perhaps, that the Bible is no forgery. Here you will read of "threshing floors," but never of *threshing machines*—of "women grinding at the mill," but never of *windmills, watermills, or sawmills*. Here frequent mention is made of the "sword," the "bow," the "spear," the "helmet," the "girdle," the "sandal," and the "shield," but no mention is made of the *pistol, the rifle, the cannon, the epaulette, the boot, or the spur*! Here you will read of the "vine," the "figtree," the "pomegranate," the "olive," and the "cedar," but never of the *plum, the peach, the pear, the maple, and the walnut*; and the reason is obvious—*those* things are peculiar to *that* country—*these* are peculiar to *this*. If the authors of the Bible, to say nothing of its inspiration, had lived in this country, or in the north of Europe, they would have made use of a language conformable to the climate and the customs of the country.

Had the book of Isaiah been the "offspring of the genius of some gloomy monk," as Mr. Paine wickedly insinuates, then how shall we account for the beautiful imagery employed by that prophet, in his most magnificent, yet truly evangelical poems? Notice particularly the 35th chapter, where you can almost *see*

"Old Jordan roll his yellow waves along
With joy, like Lebanon in ancient day;"

where you can almost *hear*

"Carmel and Sharon join the heavenly song,
While joyous shepherds chant the solemn lay."

If a "gloomy monk" of St. Bernard, for instance, had "conjured up" the book of the prophet Isaiah, he would, by a slip of the pen, probably, have written, instead of Lebanon, Mount Blanc,

"Whose head in wintry grandeur towers,
And whitens with eternal sleet;
While summer, in a vale of flowers,
Is sleeping rosy at his feet."

And then the whole forgery would have been detected. But now, you may take Maundrell, Pococke, Shaw, Clarke, Bruce and Chateaubriand, or even Volney, in your hand, and you shall find, so far as they have visited the Holy Land, and the adjacent countries, that their descriptions substantially confirm the Scripture account of those places. Had the writers of the New Testament been as ignorant,

and as wild, as some of their accusers, St. Paul, in sailing from Cesarea to Rome, would have been wrecked at Eziongeber, instead of Miletus or Malta. A little attention to these things will help to correct sundry mistakes into which the enemies of Divine Revelation sometimes fall, and he that is wise will understand these things, and make a proper use of them. The wisdom of believing the Scriptures, and of receiving them as the word of God, will appear, if we examine more attentively the high encomiums which the Psalmist bestows upon them; remembering, at the same time, that what he said had reference only to those parts of the Scriptures then in use, which, at most, could only include the Pentateuch, the book of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, the 1st of Samuel, and Job, and which he designates in this Psalm, (the 119th,) by ten significant appellations—1. The Law; 2. Statutes; 3. Precepts; 4. Commandments; 5. Testimonies; 6. Judgments; 7. Truth; 8. Word; 9. Way; 10. Righteousness.—(*See these terms explained in Dr. Clarke's preface to this Psalm.*) The Psalmist remarks,

1. "Thou hast made me *wiser* than mine enemies:" "I have *more understanding* than all my teachers:" "I *understand more* than the ancients.'

2. He attributes all this to his intimate acquaintance with the written word of God—"Thy testimonies are my meditation;" "thy commandments are ever with me;" "I keep thy precepts," &c.

Now let us apply these remarks to a christian in the present century, and take into the account the whole volume of Divine Revelation, and let us compare the actual knowledge of a Christian with the

boasted intelligence of those who are “wise above what is written.” And in order that this matter may be seen in its proper light, let us reduce it to a few simple propositions :

1. A Christian can obtain more knowledge of God from the Bible than from all that the wise men of Greece and Rome have taught. **THALES**, the first on the list of the wise men of Greece, who was so embarrassed at first when he was asked the question, “what is God?” that he required three days to answer it, at last said, “God is the most ancient of all beings ; he is the author of the universe ; he is the mind which brought chaos out of confusion into order ; he is without beginning or ending, and nothing is hid from him.”

“God is invisible and supremely intelligent,” says **PYTHAGORAS** : “In his body he is like the light, and in his soul he resembles truth. He is the universal Spirit that pervades and diffuseth itself over all nature. All beings receive their life from him.” **PLATO** defines God thus—“The efficient cause, which makes all things exist, which had no being before ; the supreme Architect, who created the heavens and the earth.”

SOCRATES reasoned thus:—“Do you believe that you are the only intelligent being : is understanding peculiar to you alone ? does blind chance work every thing ?” *Aristodemus*, with whom he was conferring, having replied that he did not see that wise Architect of the universe, *Socrates* answered him, “Neither do you see the soul which governs your own body, and regulates all its motions. You might as well conclude that you do nothing your

self with design and reason, as maintain that every thing is done by blind chance in the universe." Perceiving, at last, that the infidelity of *Aristodemus* did not arise so much from his reason, as from his heart, *Socrates* concludes with these words :—" O, *Aristodemus*, apply yourself sincerely to worship God ; he will enlighten you, and all your doubts will soon be removed."

These testimonies are certainly sublime, and show to what a pitch of excellence the human mind may be raised, when given up to contemplation. But it is far from being certain that every man in ancient Greece could reason thus ! the multitude do not generally *reason* ; they *act*, and too often *without reason*—they are not given to contemplation ! Neither is it certain that those sages of antiquity had no access to the oracles of God. At any rate, it is more than probable, that they had heard of the triumphs of the God of Israel over the gods of Egypt, and that they learned something of his character, by tradition and report, if not through the medium of the sacred volume. But after all, a Christian poet of the eighteenth century, will express, in a few short lines, more than they all. For example,

"The God that rules on high,
That all the earth surveys,
That rides upon the stormy sky,
And calms the roaring seas ;
This awful God is ours,
Our Father and our love ;
He will send down his heavenly powers,
To carry us above."

WATTS.

Where will you find any thing in ancient Greece or Rome, equal to this? Imagine, if you please, that they understood as much of the works of God as any of our modern astronomers, that they could talk of his power and greatness to any extent, in language equal to the subject—let their conceptions of God be ever so vast, and their descriptions equal to their conceptions, the last lines of our evangelical poet outstrip them all.

“This awful God *is ours*,
Our Father and *our love* ;
 He will send down his heavenly powers,
 To carry *us* above.”

How sublime, how inexpressibly tender, how animating, are the words of this Christian poet! Nothing can excel them, unless it be the words of another of our New Testament bards :

“My God is reconciled,
 His pardoning voice I hear,
 He owns me for his child,
 I can no longer fear ;
 With confidence I now draw nigh,
 And Father, Abba Father, cry.”

WESLEY.

For, as Rollin, in his exposition of the song of Moses, says, “The singular is much more tender and affecting and energetic than the plural.”

“*My* God is reconciled.”

In *Watts*, the matter is social, friendly, kind ; like the prayer which Christ taught his disciples to use in their public assemblies, “*Our Father.*” In *Wesley*

it is personal and interesting—deeply so; as personal and as interesting as the salvation of one's own soul. As a *church*, we may sing "*our God*;" it is only as *private individuals*, where the heart refers every thing to itself, that we say "*my God*." And it is in these things—"the deep things of God"—matters of personal interest and experience, that the humblest christian can say, "I understand more than the ancients." But independent of a personal experience and enjoyment of the blessings of the gospel, any person who will examine with impartiality, will find that the Scripture account of God is amazingly sublime, dignified, rational, consistent, and endearing. It represents him as eternal and independent, almighty and unchangeable; as filling immensity with his presence; as supporting, governing, and guiding all things by infinite power, justice and wisdom; it represents him as giving life and breath to all creatures; as caring for them, and supplying their wants. "All wait on Him, and he giveth them their meat in due season." "He openeth His liberal hand, and they are fed." He is an ever present being, and never slumbers nor sleeps. The very *names* of the Divine Being, as found in the Hebrew Scriptures, contain a volume of divinity. —(See Dr. Clarke's notes on *Exod.* xxxiv. 6.)

"We sing Jehovah, God, Most High,
Possessor of the earth and sky :
The Great Elohim on his throne,
The Holy, High, and Lofty One.

What wrongs the God of Patience bears !
The God of Hope relieves our fears ;

The God of Peace his thunder stills,
 Our cup the God of Comfort fills.
 One fearful name bespeaks his ire,
 'Our God is a consuming fire :'
 But O Emanuel ! Thou canst prove,
 That God is light, and God is love."

The *attributes* of God, as set forth in the Scriptures, imply every possible perfection. I know not that we can think of any excellence, natural or moral, but we may find it in the character of the Divine Being, as set forth in the Scriptures of truth.

2. A christian can obtain more correct and satisfactory information concerning the creation of the world, from the Bible, than from the most celebrated philosophers of ancient or modern times. To be convinced of this, let us select a few passages from the sacred writers, and a few from others.

OF CREATION.

The Bible account.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth; and the earth was without form and void. And God said, let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear; and it was so. And God called the dry land earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he seas."—(*Gen. i. 1—10.*)

In that sublime poem called the Book of Job, the work of creation is invariably ascribed to God. "He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing.

OF CREATION.

Other accounts.

BUFFON supposed that a comet, by a violent blow, struck off from the sun the mass of our earth, in a liquefied state, along with the masses of all the other planets at the same instant. From this supposition, he was, as he thought, enabled to assume positive dates, or epochas: as, from the actual temperature of the earth, it could be calculated how long a time it had taken to cool so far. And as all the other planets had come from the sun at the same time, it could also be calculated how many ages were still required for cooling the greater ones, and how far the smaller ones were al-

OF CREATION.

The Bible account.

He bindeth up the water in his thick clouds; and the cloud is not rent under them. By his Spirit he hath garnished the heavens.”—(Job. xxvi. 7—13.)

“By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.”—(Ps. xxxiii. 6.)

“The sea is his, and he made it; and his hand formed the dry land.”—(Ps. xcv. 5.) “The great God formed all things.”—(Prov. xxvi. 10.) “He hath made every thing beautiful in his time.”—(Eccl. iii. 11.)

“The Lord hath created the heavens: God himself formed the earth, and made it: he hath established it; he hath created it not in vain; he formed it to be inhabited.”—(Isa. xlv. 18.)

Such were the sentiments of the pious Jews before the Babylonish captivity. After that event they were of the same mind, as appears by what follows.

“Thou, even thou, art Lord alone: thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all.”—(Neh. ix. 6.) “God that made the world and all things therein, hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth.”—(Acts xvii. 24—26.)

OF THE CREATION OF MAN.

The Bible account.

“And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the

OF CREATION.

Other accounts.

ready frozen.”—(*Cuvier’s theory of the Earth.*)

“KEPLER, the astronomer, considered the globe as possessed of living faculties. Accordingly, it contains a circulating vital fluid. A process of assimilation goes on in it, as well as in animated bodies. Every particle of it is alive. The mountains are the respiratory organs. The metals are the products of rottenness and disease.”—(*Ibid.*)

“LEIBNITZ and DESCARTES imagined the world to be an extinguished sun, or vitrified globe, upon which the vapors, condensing in proportion as it cooled, formed the seas, and afterwards deposited calcareous strata.”—(*Ib.*)

“DEMAILLET supposed the globe to have been covered with water for many thousands of years. He supposed that this water had gradually retired; that all the terrestrial animals were originally inhabitants of the sea; that man himself began his career as a fish. And he asserts, that it is not uncommon, even now, to meet with fishes in the ocean, which are still only half men, but whose descendants will, in time, become perfect human beings.”—(*Ib.*)

OF THE CREATION OF MAN.

Other accounts.

“ANAXIMANDER tells us, that the first man and all animals were bred in warm moisture, in-

OF THE CREATION OF MAN.

The Bible account.

breath of life ; and man became a living soul.”—(Gen. ii. 7.)

“He commanded, and they were created.”—(Ps. cxlviii. 5.)

“The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life—I also am formed out of the clay.”—(Job, xxxvii. 4—6.)

“I have created him for my glory ; I have formed him ; yea I have made him.”—(Isa. xliii. 7.)

“The Lord is the true God, He is the living God. He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion.”—(Jer. x. 10, 12.—See also chap. i. 5.)

“Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God, in the day that thou wast created.”—(Ezek. xxviii. 13.)

“Have we not all one Father ? hath not one God created us ?” —Mal. ii. 10.—(See also Col. i. 16.)

OF THE CREATION OF MAN.

Other accounts.

closed in crustaceous skins, like crab fish or lobsters ; and that when they arrived at a proper age, their shelly prisons growing dry, broke, and made way for their liberty.”—(*Imperial Ency. Art. “Theology.”*)

“EMPEDOCLES informs us that mother earth at first brought forth vast numbers of legs, arms, heads, &c. which, approaching each other, and arranging themselves properly, started up at once full grown men.”—(*Ib.*)

The EGYPTIAN philosophers affirmed that men grew out of the earth at first like vegetables, &c.”—(*Ib.*)

It is worthy of particular observation, that the Scriptures are uniform and invariable in their testimony on these points. The passages selected, it will be remarked, were thrown in as it were, incidentally. The prophets were not writing a treatise, nor even a chapter, on cosmography ; but the philosophers were laboring to account for the origin of all things. There is a unity, harmony, and consistency among the sacred writers, though they lived far distant from each other, both as to time and place ; but among the profane authors there is

neither one nor the other, but the grossest absurdity ; and this absurdity is still greater, the farther we extend our researches into the writings of profane authors. In the Bible, the author of the book of Genesis and the author of the Apocalypse speak the same thing.—(Compare Gen. i. 11, with Rev. iv. 11.)

The STAGYRITE of old taught, that “ a Spiritual Substance is the cause of the universe, and the source of all the order, and all the beauties, as well as of all the motions, and all the forms, which we so much admire in it.” This was the opinion of Aristotle, but widely different was the opinion of Voltaire, who delivers himself as follows : “ *The Universal Cause*, that God of the philosophers, of the Jews, and of the Christians, is but a chimera and a phantom. The phenomena of nature only prove the existence of God to a few prepossessed men—it is more reasonable to admit with *Manes* of a twofold God, than of the God of Christianity. We cannot know whether a God really exists, or whether there is the smallest difference between vice and virtue.” Thus do philosophers differ ! One says, “ I know that there is a God ;” another says, “ We cannot know whether a God really exists or not.” One admits that “ virtue is man’s chief good ;” another says, “ we cannot know that there is the smallest difference between vice and virtue.”

The same discordance exists among philosophers as to the *age of the world*. “ The most approved chronologers, among Christians, who have made this subject their study, agree that the world had existed about 4000 years at the birth of Christ. But the EGYPTIANS say that it had existed *twenty-three*

thousand years at the birth of Alexander. The CHALDEANS say that it had existed *four hundred and seventy-two thousand years* in their day. The CHINESE say that it had existed upwards of *three millions of years* when Confucius was born; and some of the Greek philosophers asserted that it was *eternal*.”—(*Allix's Reflections*.)

Well might the Psalmist say, and with equal propriety every Christian—“Thou, *through thy commandments*, hast made me wiser than my enemies—I have more understanding than all my teachers—I understand more than the ancients.”

The wisdom of believing in the Scriptures, will further appear, if we consider the unhappy condition in which man is placed by the FALL. He is cast out, as it were, into a *wilderness*, where a thousand devious paths invite his weary feet. He knows not which to take. One promises to lead him to *wealth*, another to *honor*, another to *pleasure*—all to *happiness*. “There are many ways that seem right unto a man, but the end of them are the ways of death.” In the Bible, wisdom calls to him, and bids him “stand in the way and see, and enquire for the old paths, and walk therein,” and, on condition of obedience, promises him “rest unto his soul.”

Man may be considered as now on the *trackless ocean*. For, as one says, “The world is a sea—its trials are the waves, and Satan often raises a storm to distress and bewilder the mariner:”—storms, we may add, which are so sudden, that no art can evade them—so frequent that no vigilance can elude them, and so destructive that no earthly power can escape them, or ward them off. As he nears the unknown

coast, the mariner knows not which way to steer. In this situation, Revelation furnishes him with a chart, which points out every dangerous rock, shoal, current, whirlpool and vortex. If he mind its directions he may make the blest shore,—if not, he becomes a castaway.

Man may be considered in another light, *as the victim of a dangerous malady*, and the world in which he lives, as one vast hospital. He anxiously enquires, “Is there no balm to lull my pain, or to heal my wound?” Officious empirics await him at every turn and offer him aid, but all in vain. At length the Saviour of sinners, in his word inquires, “Wilt thou be made whole?” If he believe the report and venture on the physician, he obtains a cure ; if not, he dies without remedy.

In another light, he may be considered as *a soldier without arms*, beset on every side, and unable to grapple with the foe. The sacred volume points him to the armory, where he may be fully equipped from head to foot, and in the use of which he may come off more than conqueror.

But to speak without a metaphor,—man is a creature that needs a guide, in his inquiries after truth—in his search of happiness,—and in the way to heaven ; and, it is equally true, that visions, dreams, popular opinion, nature, philosophy, reason, conscience, tradition, inward light, and the example of the learned, are but fallible and uncertain guides in these important concerns. “But,” says one, “I feel that within myself which teaches me what is right and what is wrong, and is, therefore, a sufficient guide, without Revelation, Bible, or Priest.”

Admit that you think you have something within you that teaches you what is right, it must be admitted, also, that it is in those things only, in which you have previously formed your judgment, and that judgment was formed according to some acknowledged rule.—Some men think it right to swear profanely ; they say it does them good. Some children think it right to tell lies, and to deceive their playmates ; they take pleasure in it. But are these things right because something within tells them so ? Far from it. The rule may be wrong by which we judge.

A conscientious FRIEND thinks it wrong to go into a “ steeple house ” to worship,—thinks it wrong to read prayers and sermons,—thinks it wrong to praise God with instruments of music,—thinks it wrong to acknowledge “ hirelings,” as the ministers of the gospel ! Now, how is it that his conscience and mine differ so widely ? “ O thine is wrong,” says he ; “ yes, Friend, and so may thine, unless thou art a Pope, which no one, I hope, will acknowledge ! ” My conscience, I know, is often wrong in some particulars—the cowardly reprovcr slumbers till the deed is done, and then wakes up, as it were, in a hurry, and raises a tempest in my soul,—a hurricane,—an earthquake ! “ But the Lord is not in the wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire,” no, nor in the tempest of affright, nor in the storm of guilt, *after the deed is done* ;—but in that sacred, “ still, small voice,” which lies upon the written page, which looks me in the face, which utters not a word to the outward ear, but speaks volumes to the heart ! O that blessed word, how noiseless and salutary are its teachings. “ My son, if

sinner entice thee, consent thou not." I am enticed by the adversary, beset by the enemy, waylaid by the foe, allured by the flatterer, drawn aside by the tempter, thrown off my guard by the deceiver—but that kind word of admonition, "consent thou not," committed to memory, perhaps, when I was a child, rises to my view, looks me in the face, whispers to my heart, fills me with a godly, sanctifying fear, and by its timely and tender rebukes, I am kept from the snare of the destroyer. It is the word of knowledge, and of wisdom, and when it "enters the heart," and is "pleasant to the soul," and its voice is regarded, it saves the soul from death.

The case of the noble Bereans, spoken of (Acts xvii. 11.) is highly worthy of imitation. They not only had the scriptures, but "they searched them daily to see if these things were so." They esteemed them as of the highest authority in questions of religion. They regarded them as the standard of doctrine. They appealed to them in cases of doubt.

As it respects historical facts of ancient date, there is no book that gives so clear and satisfactory an account of them as the scriptures. In reference to those remote ages, every thing without the circle of Divine Revelation is but tradition and fable.

As it respects sound doctrine, whether political, moral, or religious, we may challenge the world to produce any thing equal to that which is found in the Scriptures.

As a complete system of moral philosophy, in which our duty to God and man is plainly and clearly taught, where is there any thing to compare with the Holy Scriptures? As to moral portraiture,

where are any sketches of human character, illustrious for virtue, or detestable for vice, to be found, equal to those drawn by the sacred historians ? And as to style, where is there any thing, among either ancients or moderns, that will not suffer on a comparison with these holy and venerable writers ?

“ Where then is the pretence for Deism ; or why must the advocates of scepticism distrust the divinity of Scripture ? Why should the enemies of Divine Revelation oppose the concurrent testimony of all history ? Are they thoroughly conversant with the evidences, external and internal, of the authenticity and truth of this word ? Are they aware of its just claims to credibility and inspiration ? Do they comprehend the contents of Scripture ? Have they diligently perused—humbly searched—and impartially compared the different books comprised in this wonderful volume ? But who are they that stand in the foremost ranks of Infidelity ? Idolatrous heathens, haters of fathers and haters of mothers ; murderers of children, manstealers, cannibals ; blood-thirsty Mahommedans ; apostate Jews—backslidden and degenerate Christians ! What is their standard of morality ? Are they not lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God ? Are they not profane, intemperate, abusive and abandoned ? What do they know of God ; of truth ; of right and wrong ; of the measure of temperance, justice, and of benevolence, but what they have learned from this Divine volume ? The Scriptures have diffused the light ; they have insensibly imbibed it ; and finding it to accord with reason, they flatter themselves that their reason has discovered it ; and after grazing in the

pastures of Revelation, they boast of growing fat by nature, or, to use a more elegant figure, after drinking at the streams of revealed truth, fancy that they have discovered the fountain.”—(*C. B. vol. iii. p. 473.*

“ One might be ready to smile, if it were not so serious a matter, at seeing a circle of silly admirers, gaping, and fixing their eyes on some half-learned and impudent prater, whose best and only arguments against religion, are oblique and ridiculous insinuations against the Bible, the Clergy, and the Sacrament. No doubt, ignorance, pride and vanity, are the principal causes of infidelity. For let us suppose the case of a very learned, humble, and modest man, entertaining doubts of the truth of Christianity:—if he cannot solve his doubts by examination, he will yet recollect that doubts are not certainties, and before he endeavors to publish his doubts and objections, he will ask himself, ‘ Am I quite convinced that what I doubt of cannot possibly be true ? And if I am convinced of it, am I sure that the publication of my opinions will not do more harm than good ? ’ No wise man will reject a system as venerable as Christianity, to which thousands have clung as their last hope ; for which tens of thousands have sacrificed ease, honor, pleasure, wealth and life, and which hundreds of the ablest scholars have defended with great ability and learning ; and in the faith of which hundreds of thousands have died happy, without first investigating its claims with all the candor of which he is capable. To be sure, a fine, gay, spirited philosopher, would be ashamed to be found with a New Testament in his possession, or to be

seen on his knees at prayer ; but a truly humble and sincere mind will not reject the truth, on light and frivolous grounds.”—(*Imperial Ency. Article Infidelity.*)

“ Infidelity comes with a bad grace from the Poor, for Christianity has a peculiar regard for such people. If the Gospel can be charged with any partialities, they are on the side of the poor. Beside, our Holy Religion is the only system of wisdom and morals which ever bestowed any attention upon this class of society. In this particular, it challenges comparison with all others, and claims an undisputed superiority over all. Look at the teachers of philosophy and virtue in ancient times, in any, or in every part of the world ! What was their treatment of the poor ? Did they ever provide schools for their children, hospitals for their sick, asylums for their deaf and dumb, or a retreat for their insane, or even houses of industry for their helpless and needy, or houses of refuge for the recovery and reformation of erring youth ? Or look at the countries and people in the present day, hitherto unblest with the scriptures ;—let the geography of the globe be surveyed, and say whether such institutions are to be found *out* of Christendom ! O ye poor !—must your ranks furnish the men of hardihood and folly to despise your greatest and only benefactor ? And can you thoughtlessly put away from you the only antidote to the miseries of human life—the only support of your minds under the pressure of poverty and pain ?

“ Nor can infidelity be patronized a whit better by the RICH :—if they have any wisdom as to their

real condition, and the danger of their situation, and the almost impossibility of happiness and safety in circumstances like theirs, they owe it to the counsels of God's word. We hazard nothing by assertions to this effect, for they are borne out by the facts of every day's experience. Ours is the only religion that warns the rich of their danger—that faithfully admonishes them as to the duties they owe—and that directs them to the only durable riches and honor worthy their attention! And will the rich be so unwise as to reject the best counsel: will any be so improvident and foolish as to trust in uncertain riches, and to build his house upon the sand?"—(*C. B. Vol. III. p. 434.*)

I confess that it always shocks me to meet with infidelity in an ENGLISHMAN, and I think *that* man very much dishonors his pedigree, who would claim relationship to the country of Alfred, Addison, Bacon, Boyle, Cruden, Cowper, Doddridge, Hale, Johnson, Locke, Milton, Newton, Porteus, Paley, Tillottson, Usher, Wiclif, and Young, and a host of others, and yet take part with an Infidel, or in any way enter the lists against all that is valuable in literature, just in law, elegant in poetry, profitable in science, or reasonable in religion. Nor am I better pleased to meet with infidelity in an AMERICAN, whose language and literature are the same as that of England,—for if the principles of a good and equitable government are to be found any where, I am sure they are to be found in the Bible. In what particulars do the constitution and government of this country excel? Is it not in those wherein they come nearest to the principles found in the Bible?

Infidels are sometimes found to lay claim to Mr. Jefferson as the friend of their cause ; but whence, I would ask, originated the idea, that “ all men are born free and equal ?”—in the mind of that great statesman, or in that book which tells us most unequivocally that “ God hath made of one blood all nations of men that dwell on the earth,” and that “ Christ died for all,” and that “ God is no respecter of persons ?”

But most of all, do I regret to find any thing like infidelity in WOMAN ! For the fairer and the softer sex to reject that system of Divine Truth which, in this country, has made them what they are ; and in all countries unvisited by the light of truth, has left them nearly as far below their proper standard, as the brute is below man, is matter of astonishment, sorrow and grief. But women are not of themselves so prone to infidelity as men ; and it is mostly in those cases where their morals are first corrupted by the other sex, that their faith in Divine Revelation is shaken. This accounts for the fact, in part at least, that more women profess religion than men. Men too often wish that Christianity were not true, that they may with impunity dishonor and degrade the feebler sex, without being liable to be called to an account. Let it then be the ambition of women to cling to the truth, though hanging on a cross, and should it even die, and be buried for awhile, in any place, let them embalm its memory, for it has done every thing for them ; and let them not even then despair, for it will rise again, and live forever. Yes, “ the truth as it is in Jesus,” which at first was contained in divine impressions on man’s mind,—

then on tables of stone,—then on rolls of parchment,—and lastly in printed copies of the whole Bible, shall grow, and increase, and prevail, till the earth is filled with its fruit. “For the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea.” Yes, the truth shall prevail—“for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.” AMEN.

LECTURE VII.

THE FOLLY OF INFIDELITY.

"They have rejected the word of the Lord; and what wisdom is in them."—Jer. viii. 9.

"INFIDELITY," says a modern writer,* "is one of the characters of the human mind, which from the days of paradise to our own, has never wholly left it; and till our knowledge is greatly multiplied, will, perhaps, not be universally extinguished, because it is the champion of matter against mind—of body against spirit—of the senses against reason—of passion against duty—of self-interest against self-government—of dissatisfaction against content—of the present against the future—of the little that is known against all that is unknown—of our limited experience against boundless possibility."

"But whoever he may be that opposes revelation as a whole, ought in justice to its evidences, to examine all its several parts, to weigh its distinct testimonies, and to answer, one by one, the arguments that are produced in its favor. Modern scepticism has discovered this to be a perplexing and difficult attempt: it has found it easier to deny it as a whole,

*Sharon Turner.

without even a candid examination of any one of its numerous claims. It is easy to dwell on general subjects, till truth is lost in a labyrinth of intricate and unconnected assertions. The champions of infidelity only skirmish; they continually shift their ground; they advance, they retreat, they contend now at a distance, now near at hand, sometimes in the open field, and driven thence, sometimes in ambuscade; while the troops of religion proceed to measure their ground with firm and steady feet; they may be said to be annoyed by such modes of attack, but they have the evidence of time, that they are not, and that they cannot be defeated.

“The adversaries of Revelation are compelled, whenever they can be brought to fair and open reasoning, to yield, point after point; and yet, when they have been repeatedly foiled in every attack upon the separate evidences of Christianity, they still advance bold and general objections to the whole. It is also no uncommon thing to find the friends of scepticism forming a system of their own, which they represent as the system of revealed religion, contained in the Bible; and having refuted their own production, they demand the honor of a triumph over the Bible, when, in fact, that Holy Book never maintained the principles advanced in its name, nor acknowledged the theory which is imputed to it by its opponents. It is easy to dress up Christianity in a garb wrought in the loom of their own imaginations, and then to ridicule the colors in which they array it; as the Jews of old first arrayed Christ in gorgeous apparel, crowned him with thorns, and made him look ridiculous, and then

‘mocked him, and set him at nought.’ But let Christianity be seen as it is, decorated in its native beauty, adorned with its native splendors, wearing its native majesty, and then decide upon the validity or invalidity of its claims to Divine authority.

“In entering the temple of Divine Revelation, one of the first objects that strikes the eye of the beholder, and which constitutes a grand, if not the chief support, is the *pillar of prophecy*. Like the celebrated obelisks of Egypt, it is covered with hieroglyphics, which the wisdom of man, and the skill of science, in their combined efforts, attempt in vain to decypher. There is, however, one interpreter whose elucidations never fail to render the inscription intelligible. It is Time. His hand retraces all the figures before the eyes of succeeding generations; his interpretation is recorded by the pen of faithful, impartial history; and by comparing the commentary with the original, we are able to comprehend both the one and the other. This pillar is adamant, and resists the impressions of age. Its inscriptions were written by hands which have long since mouldered into dust; and by persons who, probably, did not fully understand what they wrote; nor were able to explain the characters which they formed; but the substance of them was dictated by God himself, and the column is his own workmanship. There have been many fruitless efforts made to shake this monument of infinite wisdom, and to erase the lines of usearchable knowledge; but the pillar remains unmoved, the lines unimpaired, and the whole uninjured, either by malice or by years. Those parts of this singular pillar which are nearer

the roof of the temple, may be covered by an impenetrable cloud, as the whole pillar was once equally involved ; but Time, who has cleared away the mists from its base, shall, at the destined period, unveil the remaining part of it ; and while we shall be able to read the writing, he shall announce, with unerring perspicuity, the interpretation.

“ To speak without a figure, one of the principal evidences, and perhaps the chief at this day, in support of Divine Revelation, is *Scripture Prophecy*. The larger proportion of these predictions have been elucidated by subsequent transactions ; and corresponding events of an indisputable nature, have fixed with infallible certainty, their application to the objects foreseen and foretold. Efforts have not been wanting, on the one hand, to diminish the force of these predictions, and to reduce them to the results of great political sagacity, or mere wishes relative to the future, which might, or might not be fulfilled : on the other hand, to destroy their evidence, and to invalidate their veracity altogether, by representing them as productions subsequent to the circumstances which they profess to foretell ; but these attempts to invalidate the truth of scripture prophecy have been as unsuccessful as they are ungenerous ; and almighty truth continues to prevail. Many prophecies yet remain to be fulfilled ; but till they shall have received their full accomplishment, till the Deity shall fill up his own outline, till Time shall point out their meaning, and determine their objects, they may possibly remain impenetrably obscure. But what we know not now, we may know hereafter. To future generations the prophecies

which refer to the latter days will be as obvious and perspicuous, as those which relate to past ages are to us, who have received the evidences of history on the very facts which they predicted.

“ The attack which Mr. Paine has made upon the prophecies of scripture is singularly weak and inconclusive. The following is his language : ‘ All the remaining parts of the Bible, generally known by the name of the *prophets*, are the works of the Jewish poets and itinerant preachers, who mixed poetry, anecdote, and devotion together.’ He then passes on to show, from these assumed principles, that the word *prophesying* meant, simply, the art of making poetry. If he had said that some ancient chronicles were written in verse, he would have been nearer the mark, but he could not have been much more wide of it, if he had said that mathematics and poetry are the same. If the whole of his desultory remarks about prophecy were reduced to some form of arrangement, his arguments would be as follows : The Jewish prophets were only poets,

“ 1. Because musical instruments were sometimes employed :

“ 2. Because Saul was said to prophesy :

“ 3. Because Deborah and Barak are called prophets :

“ 4. Because David is included in their number :

“ 5. Because there were greater and lesser prophets.

“ As these are the only principles on which he attempts to shake the imperishable basis of scripture prophecy, we shall answer them separately.

“ 1. It is granted that the Hebrew word rendered

prophet, may signify a poet or a *musician*. But this circumstance is not peculiar to that language. The Greek word, *Prophetes*, the Latin *Vates*, are subject to the same diversity of meaning ; and we all know that the English word *sound*, has quite as great a variety of significations ; sometimes, for example, it means a collection of salt water ; sometimes a noise ; sometimes healthy ; and the same may be said of the word *sheet* ; thus we say, a sheet of water, a sheet of fire, a sheet of paper, and a sheet for the bed. It does not therefore follow that because the word in question is sometimes applied to a musician, a singer, a poet, it does not therefore mean a *prophet*, in the proper sense of the term. Such sophistry becomes an age of folly much better than an “ *Age of Reason !*”

The case of Elisha, mentioned 2 Kings iii. 15—20, is exactly in point, and proves, to use the words of the objector, that, ‘ *the original meaning of the word has been mistaken ;*’ not however, by the friends of revelation, but by its enemies ; for whoever will consult that passage with candor, will see that something more than a *poet* or *musician* is intended by the term *prophet*.

“ 2. The objections brought against Scripture prophecy, because it is said, ‘ Saul is also among the prophets,’ and that ‘ he prophesied,’ is equally futile, for there is no more evidence that he played on ‘ all sorts of instruments then in fashion,’ or that he ‘ made poetry,’ than that he prophesied in the common acceptation of that word. And the objections founded on his prophecies ‘ not being recorded ;’ or on his ‘ not being a regular prophet’ ; or, on his ‘ being (*afterward*) a wicked man,’ are no proof that he

was not at the time under the immediate inspiration of the Almighty.

“ 3. Deborah and Barak are called prophets, says the objector, ‘not because they predicted any thing, but because they composed a poem or song that bears their name, in celebration of an act already done;’ he therefore infers that the word prophecy does not mean to foretel future events. In this objection there are two mistakes; first, Barak is *not* called a prophet, in Scripture; secondly, Deborah *did* foretel a future event. Let the reader examine the fourth chapter of Judges, from the sixth to the ninth verse inclusive. Here the issue of a battle is foretold, than which, nothing is more uncertain, except the death of Sisera, by the hand of a female, which also was predicted. That Deborah ‘did not predict any thing,’ is absolutely false! And whether she was called a prophetess because she sung an anthem to celebrate the victory, or because she foretold the triumph before the conflict began, let the reader, and ‘common sense,’ determine.

“ 4. ‘David,’ says the objector, ‘is ranked among the prophets, for he was a musician,’ &c. It is granted that David was ranked among the prophets; not, however, ‘because he was a musician,’ but because, with a prophetic eye, he foresaw, and with a prophet’s pen recorded the piercing of the Saviour’s hands and feet, the parting of his garments, the casting lots upon his vesture, and the very words which his persecutors employed against him, and others which he himself uttered as his life departed, many centuries before the events took place. Granting that this is *poetry*, and that it was sung to the

harp in solemn style, it must be admitted it that is *prophecy* also.

“5. Another objection is brought against Scripture Prophecy, on the assumption of ‘greater and lesser prophets.’ ‘They might as well tell us,’ says the objector, ‘of the greater and lesser God, for there cannot be degrees in prophesying consistently with its modern sense.’ But why may we not call Isaiah and Jeremiah ‘greater,’ and Jonah and Obadiah ‘lesser prophets’? Are there not greater and lesser poets? and are not Homer, and Virgil, and Milton, and Shakspeare among the former, and Watts and Cowper, and some others, among the latter? Mr. Paine himself was a great reasoner when he wrote his ‘Common Sense;’ but when he wrote his ‘Age of Reason,’ both reason and common sense forsook him; and, compared with Franklin, to whom he submitted his writings against the Scriptures, he appears as the moon in her last quarter, in comparison with the sun in his glory. That *greater* reasoner foresaw and told him what would be the result of printing his Age of Reason, so called:—‘the consequence of printing this piece will be,’ says Franklin, ‘a great deal of odium upon yourself, mischief to you, and no benefit to others.’

“The manner in which Mr. Paine winds up his futile objections against the prophecies of Scripture, is in perfect keeping with other parts of his book—weak, inconclusive, and absurd. ‘It is altogether unnecessary,’ says he, ‘after this to offer any observations upon what those men, styled prophets, have written. The axe goes at the root at once, by showing that the original meaning of the word has

been mistaken, and consequently all the inferences that have been drawn from those books, the devotional respect that has been paid to them, and the labored commentaries that have been written upon them, under that mistaken meaning, are not worth disputing about.' This is a singular mode of argument. And has it come to this, that the single assertion of a Mr. Paine, unsupported by any evidence whatever, is to be taken in place of all the learning in the Christian world, and the argument closed forever? Is it not 'worth disputing about,' whether the writings of Moses, David, Isaiah, and others of like character, are prophecy, or poetry, or both, or neither? He that predicts a future event, after the manner of the Jewish seers, whether he compose in poetry or in prose, is a prophet; and that the prophets did predict future events, is a truth which cannot now be overturned." (See 2 Peter, 3d chap., and C. B. Vol. II. p. 263.)

The unbeliever rejects the volume of Divine Inspiration because of the *mysteriousness* of some of its doctrines; as, for example, the doctrine of the Trinity. But why does he object to a Trinity in Unity, when his very senses convince him that in the sun, for instance, there is substance, light, heat, and color, according to common appearances, at least, by which the common people judge? Philosophers may deny that light is a substance, but they cannot deny that there are seven prismatic colors in the solar rays, and that these seven are one. Let the reader take a *prism*, and examine; let him look at the *rainbow*, and decide.

The unbeliever rejects the sacred volume, as un-

worthy of God, because it represents the eating of an apple, or some such fruit, as the cause of all the evil that is in the world ; while he must admit that no better test of man's obedience could be given, considering the circumstances in which he was placed. Where was he ? In a garden ! What was he forbidden to do ? To eat of the fruit of a certain tree ! Had his Maker said, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife," when he had not a single neighbor in the world, it would have appeared perfectly ridiculous, but as the matter stands in the Bible, all is reasonable and plain.

The unbeliever rejects what we call the word of the Lord, because of the "horrid doctrine of a vicarious sacrifice," as he is pleased to style it, and forgets that it may be quite as consonant to the character of an all perfect Being to adopt this method of "reconciling the world unto himself," and to restore order and happiness in the universe, as for him to suffer disorder and misery to exist. That these evils exist, no infidel will deny ; but *why* they should be suffered to exist, under the government of an all perfect Being, he cannot show. Will it be said that "it is the height of injustice to cause the innocent to suffer for the guilty !" What then will the objector say to the death of innumerable millions of innocent children ?—is not that unjust too ? Let infidels point to a better remedy than that which is prescribed in the Bible, and we will hear them. They may boast of superior intellectual strength. They may affect to show that strength in demolishing the Christian fabric, and in destroying the Christian's hope. Would to God they would discover

something like wisdom and goodness in substituting something better in their place! But to rob the *poor* and *afflicted* of their only consolation and hope, and to leave them nothing in their place, is cruel and unjust to the very last degree.

The unbeliever objects to the Bible on account of the *miracles* of which it speaks, alleging that a miracle is an impossibility, and thus denies the power of the great Creator to change the laws of nature. He denies that at the command of Joshua the sun stood still, and thus would have us to believe that He who first gave to the planets their diurnal and annual motion, has not power to stop them in their course. He objects to miracles as to something "contrary to experience." He never saw the dead raised to life, and therefore disbelieves. Did he ever see a battle, like that at Waterloo?—an earthquake?—a hurricane? Did he ever see a tornado, such as visited the city of New Brunswick, the present season, (1835,) when "children were carried 100 feet into the air, and one was carried nearly a quarter of a mile without sustaining any other injury than the spraining of his wrist?" All these things are contrary to my experience, therefore I deny the truth of the accounts. What folly! I might as well say, "I do not believe that the earth revolves on its axis in twenty-four hours, because that is 'contrary to my experience;' for I see the sun rise, and set, and neither see, nor hear, nor feel any thing to the contrary. Must I then believe what my senses contradict?" Yes, or be guilty of the greatest folly! The fact is, the moment we deny the possibility of a miracle, we limit the power of God, and

might as well turn atheists at once ; for what kind of God must that be who is so governed by the laws of irresistible fate that he cannot regulate his own works, or change their laws at pleasure ? Surely He who made the world can govern it, and the power that formed man from the dust of the earth can raise him from the dust again !

The unbeliever objects to the Divine authenticity of the holy Scriptures, because they do not harmonize with his views of modern astronomy. He first assumes that "Christianity is a religion which professes to be designed for the single benefit of our world ; and thence infers that God cannot be the author of this religion, for He would not lavish on so insignificant a field such peculiar and such distinguishing attentions as are ascribed to Him in the Old and New Testaments." "This," says Dr. Chalmers, "is a popular argument against Christianity, not much dwelt upon in books, but often insinuated in conversation. But how do infidels know that Christianity is set up for the single benefit of this earth and its inhabitants ? How are they able to tell us, that if you go to other planets, the person and the religion of Jesus are unknown there ? For any thing they can tell, sin may have found its way into these other worlds—their people may have banished themselves from communion with God ; and many a visit may have been made to each of them on the subject of our common Christianity, by commissioned messengers from the throne of the Eternal ! But suppose that only one, among the countless myriads of worlds, should be visited by a moral pestilence, which spread through all its peo-

ple, and brought them under the doom of a law, whose sanctions were unrelenting and immutable ; it were no disparagement to God, should he, by an act of righteous indignation, sweep this offence away from the universe which it deformed ; nor should we wonder, though, among the multitude of other worlds from which the ear of the Almighty was regaled with songs of praise, he should leave the strayed and solitary world to perish in the guilt of its rebellion. But tell me, oh ! tell me, would it not throw the softening of a most exquisite tenderness over the character of God, should we see him putting forth his every expedient to reclaim to himself those children who had wandered from him—and, few as they were, when compared with the host of his obedient worshippers, would it not impart to his attribute of compassion, the infinity of the Godhead, that, rather than lose the single world which had turned to its own way, he should send the messengers of peace to woo and to welcome it back again ; and, if justice demanded so mighty a sacrifice, and the law behoved to be so magnified and made honorable, tell me whether it would not throw a moral sublime over the goodness of the Deity, should he lay upon his own Son the burden of its atonement, that he might again smile upon the world, and to hold out the sceptre of invitation to all its families ?”

To reject the volume of Divine Revelation as *unnecessary*, on the ground that the light of nature is sufficient to guide mankind into the ways of truth, virtue, and happiness, is monstrously absurd ! For what can the boasted light of nature

do. "Surely," says Mr. Dick, "if the light of nature be sufficient, it is sufficient for nature's children ; and I know of none who so well deserve this character, as those who, in their intellectual and moral features, are just such as nature formed them, having undergone no alteration for the worse or better, by art, or by tradition. If we wish to judge of the strength of unassisted reason, in order to ascertain whether it be sufficient for all the purposes of life and happiness, let us observe its operations in the rudest savages."

But what has reason, or the light of nature, done for these savages ? Has it taught them the value of gold ? or even of iron ? Has it taught them the use of the pen ? the plough ? the loom ? the anvil ? or the spade ? As to the *arts*, they are inferior to the fowls of the air ; as to the *sciences*, they are on a level with the beasts of the field ; as to *literature*, they are not a whit in advance of the antediluvians ; and as to *religion*, it is a question if they know any more of its duties, and of its enjoyments, than the earth on which they tread. And if enlightened infidels can spend all their energies in opposition to that system of religion which alone is worthy of God, it is not likely that unenlightened savages have discovered any thing more worthy of his name and character. If the infidel, who cannot but be under some obligation to Christianity for the light he enjoys, cannot form a perfect system of religion, it is not likely that an untutored Indian can accomplish so great a work.

We may notice how insufficient *human reason* has been in all ages of the world, to conduct man aright.

in the paths of virtue and happiness. If reason ever shone without a cloud upon the ways of man, we may well suppose it was before sin and death entered into this world—in *Paradise*, where, uncontrolled by appetite, unbiased by prejudice, uncorrupted by example, uninfluenced by education, it had more power and freedom to act, and to act wisely, than it has ever had since. But did it suffice to keep man in that good and right way in which his Maker had placed him? It did not! The *subtilty* of the serpent overcame him—the Devil *out-reasoned* him, and he fell from his first estate, by listening to the suggestions of one who set up his reason in opposition to Divine Revelation. Human reason is the parent of Idolatry. Time was when all mankind had the knowledge of God. “But when they knew God they glorified him not as God, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. They professed themselves wise, but they became fools; and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.”—(Rom. i. 21—23.)

How was it in Egypt, the cradle of the sciences, the very place whither the sages of Greece, in after ages, perfected themselves in human learning? Why, Egypt herself was the nursery of Idolatry. No doubt the sons of Noah had *reason* on their side, when they first proposed to improve upon the ancient forms of worshipping the invisible God,—when they first recommended to approach the Deity, through the medium of his works, and to adore those images of his Eternal Power and Godhead which were visible, and within their reach! And there is no

question but *reason* was busy enough, when, in after ages, the wisdom of councils prevailed, so far to alter the few and simple forms of Christianity to a pompous and significant assemblage of forms and ceremonies, as should attract and influence the gazing multitude. And, without controversy, it was the project of *reason*, more than once or twice, so to explain some of the mysteries, and doctrines of our holy religion, as to open the flood gates of heresy, in every direction, upon the Christian church.

Moreover, when the wisdom of the church of Rome could go no farther than to establish the Pope for an infallible guide, in matters of faith and conscience,—which was next to the greatest effort that could possibly be made, for it was making one man's reason the guide of the church universal,—then reason seemed to take her rest, as it were, in a profound sleep ; but waking up again, after the lapse of ages, she found that things had gone wrong, and setting herself up for an infallible guide, she found in the Revolution of France as many worshippers as had ever paid their devotions at the shrine of St. Cloud. Then was the “ Age of Reason ;” and but for a few of the spirits elect, whom God appointed to stand in the gap, the world would have been overrun with reason, such as it was, to the exclusion of religion altogether ! And even *now*, there is danger lest Infidelity, under the name of Reason, or Rationalism, or something else, will prevail, and that religious creeds will be so modified and multiplied, as to exclude the light of Divine Revelation altogether.

A great many object to the volume of Inspiration as being unworthy of the character of God, because it has not been given to all the human race. "It is as absurd," say they, "to suppose that the Bible emanated from the impartial and benevolent Author of the human race, as to suppose him to have created a sun, which should enlighten only one region of the globe!" This objection comes with a very bad grace from an infidel, whose idol is philosophy, and whose god is reason; for it is a truth that the same objection lies against philosophy and reason. All men are not philosophers,—all have not an equal share of reason to guide them; therefore reason and philosophy are not of God, because they are not given equally to all!

"It is the greatest folly imaginable, to call in question the divine authority of the scriptures, because they have not been published as extensively, as in our opinion a divine revelation should be, since one great reason why this revelation is not universal, is the opposition of infidels. Let the unbeliever himself subscribe to the Divine authenticity of the Bible, and do all he can to promote its circulation, and the objection will soon fall."

It is often denied that the Scriptures of the Old Testament are a Revelation from God, because they seem to sanction bloodshed and cruelty. The expulsion of the Canaanites from Palestine by Joshua, and the conduct of David as "a man of war," are often brought up against the sacred volume, as furnishing an objection too weighty to be removed. But in answer to this, it may be replied, "God, the great Governor of the universe, who possesses all

power and authority over his creatures, and may justly punish those who violate his laws, in what manner soever he pleases, commanded the Israelites to exterminate the Canaanites for their horrible crimes. The Israelitish nation, therefore, was the sword of God, the Great Magistrate of the earth; and they were no more to be condemned in thus acting, than the executioner who fulfils the last sentence of the law. And before other nations invade the territory of their neighbors on the same supposed authority as the Israelites, the same commission from heaven must be given; and that commission must be authenticated by miracles equally evident, perpetual and wonderful.”—(*Townsend.*)

But how comes it to pass that infidels, all at once, are so ready to believe the scriptures? What authority have they for believing that “the Israelites stormed, took, sacked, burnt, and destroyed the city of Jericho, and put every living thing to death by the sword, even dumb beasts, harmless youths, young women, and innocent children?” Why, just as much authority for believing that part of the impartial history, as they have that which tells of the *miracles*, and no more! How is this, that *unbelievers* are so ready to *believe* every thing that is *evil* of the people of God, and so slow of heart to believe all the rest? The *folly* of such conduct is as palpable as the *wickedness* is great!—“They have rejected the word of the Lord, and what wisdom is in them?”

It has often been denied that God ever held *colloquial* intercourse with man; yet the same objectors will plead that God often speaks to us in his works and ways. How then does he speak to us?—by

“*nods and smiles, and frowns?*” Why, this is the way that children, and mutes, and pantomimes, address us. To be sure, poetry, by an ingenious fiction, has given a speaking power to the visible heavens,—

“In reason’s ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice.”

“But, after all, abstract and complex truths, and the dark things of futurity, and the deep things of God, cannot be unfolded without a literal instructor. No man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him: even so the things of God knoweth no man but the spirit of God. How then can they be known but by Divine revelation? And if the things of God cannot be known but by immediate revelation from God, we may well suppose that He who is infinitely wise, and good, will not only make known his mind to man, but will take the best method of making it known. Scenic representations may affect the passions, and the senses, but they cannot impart light to the understanding like dialogue and demonstration.” (*Mc Nicol.*)

It is admitted that there are some things in the Bible which at first view seem to be at variance with the character of God—the conduct of some of the saints—the actions of some of the prophets—the ceremonial laws of Moses in some instances—the historical relations of some things—and the poetical descriptions of others, seem, at first sight, to shock our delicacy and forbid our assent. But it must be remembered that, in the common affairs of life often, and more particularly in some of the most

useful arts, many things are brought into use which seem calculated to destroy, rather than to save life. The lancet in the hands of a skilful surgeon, and the veriest poison in creation, in the hands of a wise physician, often prevent death, and serve as means to restore us to health. Iron bolts are as necessary, in a well built ship, destined to float on the ocean, as the lighter timbers, and the spreading canvass. "When we must go to sea, we shall choose to take a voyage in a vessel skilfully built and well rigged. The Deist may despise the equipment, and without furnishing any thing better, may drift away without either rudder, compass, sails, or oars ; but we know if we embark and abide in the ship, and follow the directions of our Captain, we shall be saved."—(*Mc Nicol.*)

"I see not," says Mr. Faber, "how, upon his principles, the Deist can have any religion, or even be a virtuous man ! The reason is obvious ; he cannot be certain that he will please God by acting justly, until he first knows that God is just. He cannot be certain that he will please God by acting mercifully, until he first knows that God is merciful, and that he delights in mercy. He cannot be certain that he will please God by laboring after goodness, until he first knows that God is good. Without a previous certain knowledge of the moral attributes of God, it is wholly impossible for him to determine what line of conduct will be most pleasing to his Creator. Doubtless, if God be just, and good, and merciful, then justice, and goodness, and mercy, will be acceptable to him ; for like ever delights in its like. But here is the difficulty—the

Deist has no means of ascertaining whether God be just, and good, and merciful, or whether he be unjust, and bad, and unmerciful. Nay, he cannot so much as tell, whether there may not be many Gods, concurring indeed in the creation of the world, but widely differing in their moral attributes ; he cannot tell whether there may not be two independent principles of good and evil. Under these circumstances of total ignorance, how is he to frame a religion for himself? He may fondly imagine, that, by cultivating virtue, he is rendering an acceptable service to the Deity, when, all the while, he is doing what is most abhorrent from the divine nature, and therefore most displeasing. He can have no certainty that the very actions which gratify one God may not offend another."

In conclusion, it must be admitted that there is every thing, as to doctrine, in the scriptures, which it is necessary for man to believe concerning himself, his origin and future destiny ; his Maker, and his Maker's will ; his relationship to his Maker, and his duty to him ; his relationship to his fellow man, and the various duties of his civil, religious, filial, fraternal, conjugal, parental, domestic, and social relations. Is there a *duty* which he can possibly owe to himself, or to another, that is not taught in the scriptures? Is there a *crime*, transgression, or offence, which it is possible for him to commit in thought, word, or deed, that is not therein forbidden? Is there a *truth* which it is necessary for man to know, in order to his happiness here and hereafter, which is not taught in the scriptures? Is there any *state* or *condition* into which it is possible for

man to come, or be placed, but there is a *direction* given in the Scriptures how to fill that state with honor, or to bear that condition as he ought? Is there a *prayer* which it would become man to utter before God, the form or outline of which is not found in the Scriptures? Is there a *song of praise* to God which it would be suitable for man to sing, either on earth or in heaven, the *theme* of which is not found in the scriptures? Is there a *promise* of comfort, or of aid, or of pardon, or of grace, which it would be suitable in God to make to his helpless creature man, which is not found in the Bible? Is there a *virtue*, or *temper*, or *moral excellence*, that can possibly adorn human nature, or that it would be well to cultivate and promote, but is recommended in the sacred volume? And finally, is there any thing that is "true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report," but is taught, recommended, and enjoined in the word of God? All the "works of the flesh," as they are called by the apostle Paul in his epistle to the Galatians, and all the "fruits of the Spirit," are either pointed out, or alluded to in some form or other in these writings; and are not the one as strictly forbidden as the other are strongly enjoined? And are not the pains of an everlasting death denounced against the wicked, and the joys of an endless life promised to the righteous in every age and place? Our Bible teaches us to love God with all our heart, and mind, and strength, and our neighbor as ourselves. Can the Deist point us to any thing better? Has he any thing equal to the moral law of Moses, contained in the ten commandments? Has he any thing to compare with our Saviour's ser-

mon on the Mount, as contained in the 5th, 6th, and 7th chapters of St. Matthew? or the prayer that he taught his disciples to use? or the lesson on charity which St. Paul wrote to the Christians at Corinth? A professed Atheist once asked me the question, "What is God?" I answered, "God is a Spirit." He asked me a second time, "What is God?" I answered, "God is Light." He asked me a third time, "What is God?" I answered, "God is Love." He inquired again, "Who ever saw God, or heard him speak?" I answered,—

"Thou hear'st the rustling among the trees,
And feel'st the cool refreshing breeze,
And see'st the clouds move along the sky,
And the corn-fields waving gracefully.

'Tis the wind that rustles among the trees,
That comes in the cool refreshing breeze,
That drives the clouds along the sky,
And causes the corn to wave gracefully.

The wind is something thou canst not see,
'Tis thin air—and a source of life to thee,
And it teaches that something may really be,
May exist, and work, which thou canst not see.

And those who are under the Spirit's control,
Perceive in their minds, and feel in their soul,
That the Spirit of Light, which comes from above,
Is a Spirit of Life, and a Spirit of Love."

Sacred Musical Offering.

Our religion is of divine origin—"It is from above, and is pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy." Witness the con-

duct of Christ, and of the first martyr, who both prayed for their murderers. Can this be said of Deism, and of its disciples? Our religion teaches us to deny ungodliness, and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." Can this be said of Infidelity? Our religion is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." Our Bible tells us that "the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." (Isa. xxxv. 10.) It tells of a state when "God shall wipe away all tears from his servant's eyes, and when there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, nor pain." (Rev. xxi. 4.) Can any thing like this, calculated at once to inspire our hope, to exercise our faith, to dissipate our fears, and increase our love to God, be found in any or all the infidel writings in the world?

Who are they that fill our hospitals, penitentiaries, and prisons—the true believers or unbelievers? Or, to soften the question a little, To what does Bible Christianity lead, when carried to its utmost point? And to what does a bold and fearless infidelity lead, when traced to its final result? Many infidels have been converted on a death bed, but no one ever abjured Christianity in a dying hour!

LECTURE VIII.

ON THE TOTAL DEPRAVITY OF HUMAN NATURE.

“The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.”—Psalm xiv. 2, 3.

THE source of all infidelity is the depravity of the human heart, the universal corruption of our common nature. Aside from the declarations of Scripture, we have proofs innumerable, that man is totally depraved; but one passage from the book of God is sufficient to settle this question—*“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.”* The Scriptures, however, are uniform and invariable in their testimony on this point. From Genesis to Revelation, in one way or other, they most unequivocally declare that “man is very far gone from original righteousness.” In the sixth chapter of Genesis, it is recorded that “God saw the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only

evil continually—the earth was filled with violence—for all flesh had corrupted his way.” This is an awful account, and from it we learn that the depravity of man, at that time, was as *original* as the first germs of thought; as *universal* as every imagination of his heart; as *constant* and *unceasing* as the act of breathing; as *extensive* as the race of men, and as *daring* as their powers would admit. “The surface of the earth was the theatre of crime; its productions were abused to the nourishment of the worst passions; the atmosphere was rent with oaths, and polluted with blasphemies; the springs of domestic life were poisoned; its sacred ties were burst asunder; authority was derided and defied; oppression reigned, and robbery and murder were the incidents of every day.”—(*Rev. P. M’Owan.*)

Such was the condition of the old world, which, according to the testimony of Moses, was so overrun with crime, so overspread with iniquity, that “it repented the Lord that he had made man.” So hopeless was their case, that their recovery was impossible. Except in the family of Noah, there was no religion in the world, not even the form of godliness, much less the power; there was not even the semblance of piety, nor the least vestige of the worship of the true and living God—“God was not in all their thoughts.” But if the Old World was destroyed for its impiety, might we not expect that the New World would profit by such a solemn admonition? Yet such was not the case, for “when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.”

So little was the heart of man improved by those heavy judgments, which had swept into one common grave all the original inhabitants of the earth, except one single family. And the descendants of this chosen family, instead of profiting by the chastisements of Heaven, fell on a new expedient of offending the God of their fathers. "The Old World," says an old divine, "was destroyed for its no-religion, and the New World was soon overrun with a false one, which is worse than none at all." And it is remarkable, that this second and greater error of mankind, which was worse than the first, was the dictate of what some people call *Reason*, or "wisdom," as the Apostle Paul styles it. "Professing themselves wise," says he, "they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God, into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and to four-footed beasts, and to creeping things."

This was the origin of idolatry, which was introduced into the world by the descendants of Noah, soon after the flood, and was at once the project of their wisdom and the proof of their folly; for what greater stupidity can man evince, than to pay his devotions to a dumb idol? We sometimes account Atheism the greatest folly, but it would seem that Idolatry is, at least, one remove farther from true wisdom than even Atheism itself, for it were better to acknowledge no God at all, than to say to a stock or a stone, "Thou art my God."

That tremendous account of the depravity of man, given in the first chapter of Romans, is but too true a picture of the Gentile world, from the

time of the building of Babel, and the confusion of tongues, until the coming of Christ. The last verse of that chapter seems to be the finishing stroke—the last description—the highest possible coloring that can be given to the depravity of the human heart. After the Apostle has enumerated a list of crimes, too black to be repeated, and finished his description of characters in language the most appalling, he adds one more trait in these words, than which the bottomless pit itself could scarcely furnish a deeper shade, “Who, knowing the judgment of God, that they which do such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.”

In this description the Apostle seems to say, that man is capable of sinning beyond the circle of his actual existence, for he not only commits such sins himself, but also takes pleasure in others that commit them. But the guilt of this mode of sinning is incalculable; for when a man takes pleasure in the recollection of having committed sins which he is now no longer able to commit; when his powers, means, and opportunities of sinning have become superannuated by age, restricted by poverty, and limited by sickness, still for him to take pleasure in the remembrance of former crimes, in forming new plans of sinning, and in the sins of others, argues a depth of depravity almost beyond description, and an amount of guilt almost inconceivable. The propriety of these remarks will appear from the following considerations:—

“1. There is no natural motive to induce or tempt a man to this mode of sinning, as in the case

of other sins, and it is a most certain truth, that the less the temptation is, the greater the sin; for in every sin, by how much more free the will is in its choice, by so much more is the act more sinful. In the commission of other sins, there is always some strong inducement; thus the thief steals to satisfy his hunger, the drunkard to satisfy his thirst;—thus uncleanness is an unlawful gratification of another appetite, and covetousness a boundless pursuit of the principle of self-security. So that all other sins are founded in some natural desire, and therefore pleasing, and on that account capable of soliciting and enticing the will. In a word, there is hardly any one sin, of direct and personal commission, but what is an abuse of one of those two grand natural principles; either that which inclines a man to *preserve himself*, or to *please himself*.

“But what *natural* principle can be gratified by *another man's* pursuit of vice? for no man can feel by another man's senses, so that to take pleasure in other men's sins, is to take delight in vice for its own sake; it is an exemplification of the malice of that evil spirit, who delights in seeing those sins committed, of which the very condition of his nature renders him incapable. All that can be said in this case is, that violence is done to nature beyond the usual modes of sinning, and the devil and long custom have superinduced upon the soul new, unnatural, and absurd desires, which have no real object, which relish things not at all desirable, but feed only on filth and corruption, and give a man both the devil's nature and the devil's delight—who has no other happiness but to dishonor his Maker, and to destroy

his fellow creatures—to corrupt them here, and to destroy them hereafter. In fine, there is as much difference between the pleasure that a man takes in his own sins, and that which he takes in other men's, as there is between the wickedness of a man and the wickedness of a devil.

“2. A second reason why a conduct like this is attended with such enormous guilt, is the unlimited nature of this mode of sinning; for hereby a man contracts a kind of universal guilt, and, as it were, *sins over* the sins of all other men. So that while the *act* is exclusively *theirs*, the *guilt* is equally *his*. Consider any man as to his personal powers, and opportunities of sinning—at the greatest, they must still be limited by the measure of his actings, and the term of his duration. His active powers are but weak, and his continuance in the world but short; so that nature is not sufficient to keep pace with his corruptions, by answering his desire with proportionable practice. To instance only in those two grand extravagances of life—lust and drunkenness: let a man be never so general in his debaucheries, yet age will in time chill the heats of appetite, and the impure flame will either die of itself, or consume the body which harbors it. Let a man be never so insatiable in drinking, he cannot be always pouring in; but he will, in the compass of years, drown his health and strength, if not himself too, which will, sooner or later, put an end to the debauch.

“But this *collateral* mode of sinning, which we have been attempting to delineate, is neither confined to place, nor weakened by age. The bed-ridden,

the gouty, the paralytic, all may, on this account, equal the activity of the strongest, and the speed of the most impetuous sinner. Such a one may act the murderer, even when he can neither lift a hand nor stir a foot; and may invade his neighbor's bed, even while weakness has tied him down to his own. He may sin over all the adulteries and debaucheries, all the frauds and oppressions of the whole neighborhood, and break every command of God's law by proxy. *And it would be well for him if he could be damned by proxy too.*

“In this sense a man may grasp in the sins of all countries and ages, and by an inward liking of them, participate in their guilt. He may take a range over the whole world, draw in that wide circumference of vice, and centre it in his own polluted breast. Hence we see the infinitely fruitful and productive power of this mode of sinning; how it can increase and multiply beyond all measure of *actual* commission; how vastly it swells the sinner's account in an instant! So that a man shall, out of the various villanies acted round about him, extract one mighty aggregate of guilt, and adopt it for himself, and thus become chargeable before God, the Judge of hearts, and accountable for a world of sin, in his own person.”—(*Coke on Rom. i. 32.*)

That the Gentiles who were without the law, and without the knowledge of God, should be guilty of such enormities as above described, is not to be wondered at; but that the Jews, the chosen people of God, to whom were committed the “holy oracles,” should evince such depravity, is truly wonderful; but so it is, for the same Apostle, in a subse-

quent chapter, shows that they were no better than the Gentiles ; for says he, "Are we better than they? No, in no wise : as it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one ; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable ; there is none that doeth good, no not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre ; with their tongues they have used deceit ; the poison of asps is under their lips ; their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness ; their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery are in their ways, and the way of peace have they not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes." Such is the description of the moral character of the Jews, given by one who himself was a Jew, and knew well as to the truth of what he wrote. This description applies to them before the coming of the Messiah, and answers well to the period of the prophets Hosea and Ezekiel, whose writings have often been thought too indelicate to be read before a Christian assembly. But if the prophets were under the necessity of using such gross descriptions, how deeply fallen and greatly depraved must that people be who stood in need of such severe rebukes.

It has been the fond conceit of many, that if Christian teachers would only lay aside those terrific descriptions of the wrath of God which we find in the Scriptures, and cease to make use of "*the terrors of the Lord*," in order to persuade men to be virtuous, and should go about to represent our Heavenly Father as all love and mercy, that every

sinner would “cease to do evil and learn to do well.” It has been even asserted that if virtue were only embodied and visible, all men would fall in love with it. But facts prove the contrary of all this; for how was it in the time of our great Redeemer, in whose character innocence and virtue, dignity and grace, mercy and love, appeared in their highest perfection? Did the Jews of that day fall in love with virtue, when thus embodied and visible? Far otherwise! “He was despised and rejected of men—he was oppressed and he was afflicted, though he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.”

The same Apostle that described the sins of the fathers of the Jewish people, in the passages already quoted, describes the sins of their children thus: “They both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary, (*or opposed,*) to all men. Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles, that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway.” (1 Thes. ii. 15, 16.)

It is not the character of fallen man to be moved to repentance by an exhibition of the goodness of God alone; something else is necessary, else the Apostle had not spoken thus: “Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance, and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth, (*or ought to lead,*) thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.” (Rom. ii. 4, 5.)

But admitting that Jews and Heathens are thus depraved, does it follow that those who are blessed with the light of the glorious gospel of Christ are so too? Not *necessarily*, certainly; nevertheless, it is certain that where the gospel has been preached for fifteen centuries, the people in their unrenewed state are equally depraved. In Christian lands, it is equally true, as in lands unvisited by the light and blessings of Christianity, that “the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” Every sinner among us may say, “Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.” We, as well as the heathen, “go astray from the womb,” “and are by nature children of wrath even as others.” By nature we are not a whit better, and by practice often worse, till born of the Spirit. It is as true of us as of the Hottentots themselves, that, “out of the heart proceedeth evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness.” But it is not Christianity that makes us so—these things are not sanctioned by the gospel, much less produced by it—they are not the fruits of the Spirit,—they are the works of the flesh—the offspring of the carnal mind, which is enmity against God.

It is no libel upon human nature to say, that the understanding is darkened,—the judgment biased,—the will obstinate,—the conscience treacherous,—the memory unfaithful,—the imagination foolish,—the affections misplaced,—the passions ungovernable,—the reason perverted, and the principles awfully corrupt; for this is the case, more or less, with

every unregenerate child of man, among Jews as well as Gentiles, and in the Christian's country as well as among the heathen.

The representations of Scripture are so various and so striking, that it is matter of wonder and astonishment, how any one, professing to believe in the Bible, can deny, or for a moment doubt the doctrine of man's original, hereditary, and universal depravity. The Scriptures describe man as "*earthly, sensual, devilish.*" They compare him to "the degenerate plant of a strange vine," Jer. ii. 21 ;—to a "wild olive tree," Rom. xi. 24 ;—and his heart to "the rock," to the "way-side," and to "thorny ground," Matt. xiii. 4. For hardness of heart he is compared to *iron* ; for impudence, to *brass* ; for stupidity, to *lead*, and for hypocrisy, to *tin* ; and for his comparative worthlessness to "the dross of silver." Ezek. xxii. 18.

Man, as to his inferior nature, has the passions and propensities of an animal, and, in his unrenewed state, the language of his conduct is, "What shall I eat ? What shall I drink ? and Wherewithal shall I be clothed ?" Under this view, the Scriptures liken him to "a wild ass's colt," Job. xi. 12 ;—to "a dog," and to "a swine," Matt. vii. 6 :—to a "ferocious beast," Psalm xxii. 12, 16 ;—and to a "poisonous serpent," Matt. xxiii. 33. As to his superior nature, he has the attributes of a demon, and in this respect he is likened to that fallen spirit, who, in Scripture, is called the devil. "Ye are of your father, the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." John viii. 44. He is a calumniator, a slanderer, and an accuser of the brethren, and so are

his children. He is a liar, and a murderer, and so are his children. Such are the descriptions given us in holy writ, of our fallen race, and they are borne out and sustained by matter of fact, and every day's experience. The history of our race is a history of unjust, cruel, and aggressive wars ; a history of tyrannies, despotisms, and oppression on the one hand, and of servitude, slavery, and cruel bondage on the other. The history of civilized nations, is a history of outrage and violence, of injustice and fraud. The history of the Church is a history of "error, heresy, and schism," of needless controversies and endless debates, of apostacies within, and persecutions without ; and the history of heathen nations is a history of ignorance and superstition, of impurity and folly, of injustice and cruelty, of sanguinary rites, and "abominable idolatries."

In proof that mankind are universally depraved, we may notice a universal disregard of the divine laws. Notwithstanding "the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, and just, and good," and the universal observance of them would secure universal righteousness, peace, and happiness, yet there is a total disregard of them among all classes of men. But as mankind cannot be governed without law of some kind, and they will not submit to the laws of God, they are, therefore, for their own safety, obliged to make laws to govern themselves ; which laws are so multiform and variable, so changing and mutable, that not half the community know what they are. Here we have the common law, and the statute law, the law of the nation, and the law of the state, ecclesiastical law, and municipal law, the law

of honor, and laws for the poor ; and in addition to this, we must have a constituted authority, and an armed force to see that the laws are obeyed, and even then men are to be found who are totally reckless not only of law, but of all authority and power. Surely, a race of beings that will not regard the laws of God, that cannot govern themselves, and that will not be governed without such an array of power and authority, and so much expense of law and legislation, nor even with it, must certainly be greatly depraved.

In further proof of the depravity of our nature, we may notice a universal contempt of the authority of God. It avails not that he has given us laws, sanctioned by the most awful penalties ; it avails not that he hath said, “ the wages of sin is death,” and “ the soul that sinneth shall die ;” and, “ cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them :”—all this avails nothing with man. Though God should destroy the whole world by a flood, or a part of it by fire ; though he should send a sword through the land, and the sword should be followed by pestilence and famine ; though he should speak to us in the thunder of his power, in the earthquake, the tempest or the storm ; though he should take away more than half our race by death, and threaten with eternal death the guilty rebel, yet he heeds it not, but pours contempt upon the authority of his Maker, as though he were such an one as himself.

Another proof of the depravity of the human heart is derived from the universal love of sin which obtains among our race. It is the nature of man to

sin ; he loves it as he loves his life. Though God in his just indignation against sin, has often connected punishment so closely with transgression, that it is next to impossible to escape, yet so fully are mankind bent on sinning against God, that they will, for a momentary gratification, run the risk of present and eternal pain. To instance, as before, in those two most opposite species of transgression, *covetousness* and *dissipation* ; though God has assured us in his word that “ they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition ;” and though we see with our eyes the misery that the drunkard brings upon himself and family, yet there are those that love money, and there are those that love strong drink to that degree, that nothing but the grace of God, and hardly that, will cure them of these different species of intemperance—so deeply is the love of sin rooted in our fallen nature.

Another proof that man is depraved, is discovered in his unwillingness to repent. Though sin is confessed to be an evil of unmeasured magnitude, how unwilling is the sinner to break off his sins by repentance. How often will he fight against the convictions of his own mind, and stifle the voice of conscience, and “ quench the spirit,” and harden his heart in sin, and strengthen himself in iniquity, rather than repent and be converted, and turn from his evil ways.

Another proof of the corruption of human nature is found in the sinner’s aversion to prayer. Though it is the fashion to have a prayer on every public

occasion, whether of joy or of sorrow, yet there is in the sinner's heart an utter aversion to true penitential confession of sin, and earnest supplication for mercy. Hence the duty of the closet is neglected, the family altar is forsaken, and the hour of prayer is forgotten, or dispensed with, and the duty, when performed, is slightly attended to, hurried over, and soon forgotten. Ten thousand prayers are made, and said, without obtaining any visible answer from God, which is a sure proof that sinners seldom pray as they ought. Sinners, indeed, often affect an excuse for neglecting prayer, on the ground that it is a sin for them to pray ; so wonderfully conscientious are they when required to do their duty, that out of a pretended fear of doing wrong, they will often neglect the positive commands of God. Nor are the saints wholly without blame in this matter.

Another proof that all men are depraved, is seen in their delay of conversion, and neglect of their own souls' salvation. Seldom, unless there is a great revival of religion in the church, or an alarming providence in the neighborhood, or sickness comes upon them, or death stares them in the face, do sinners think seriously of betaking themselves to repentance, and the duties of a holy life. The world, and the things of the present life, engross the attention till almost the last hour of their mortal career.

Another proof of the total defection of our common nature, and the awful depravity of the human heart, is discoverable in the multitude of evil thoughts, words, and actions, that make up the private history of every individual ; in that contempt

of religion—hatred of good men—enmity to God, and persecution of the people of God, which is manifest in one form or other in every age and place. *Persecution*, did I say? Of what? Of whom? Why, of the image of Christ, wherever it is found, and of the most pious among men. Let a man only profess an extraordinary degree of sanctity, and he will be sure to bring upon him the rancorous hate, and ill will, not merely of the open infidel, but of the formal professor, and of all the disciples of a decent morality. The restraints of religion are irksome to the carnal mind. It is said of the slaves at the south, “that when a resolution is manifested by the masters to lay them under a continued religious obligation, they express a stronger unwillingness to be in subjection, than on any other occasion; so great is their opposition lest their consciences should be bound.” And is it not the same with children and young people among us?

As another proof that all mankind are depraved, we may notice the universality of that curse, recorded in Genesis iii. 16, which has fallen with such tremendous weight upon the better half of our race. We may add to this the universal weakness, helplessness, ignorance, perversity, and sufferings of children. How many millions inherit a sickly constitution, and a demon-like temper, which are a constant and an abiding affliction to them as long as they live. How are we all exposed, during infancy, childhood, and youth, to the fire, to the water, and to poisons in the animal, vegetable, and mineral world! How are the elements, and the brute creation arrayed against us, and to what an awful ex-

tent is man himself the common enemy of man ! Again, the employments which many are doomed to pursue in order to prolong a miserable life ; how degrading, how dangerous, how perplexing, and how profitless in general ! Then, again, the diseases to which we are subject, how numerous, how painful, how distressing are they ! Only think of the dangers of the sea, of the camp, and of the mine, and how many of our race are doomed to toil and perish in those three departments of human pursuit.

Think again, how much more enviable is the situation of the brute (if we except the hope of a better life) than that of man. They have but few diseases to contend with—they can sooner take care of themselves—they need no education—they have no cares about the morrow, or even what they shall eat, or drink, or wear, to-day—they have no tormenting fear of death, or consciousness of guilt, or shame, or fear of future reckoning—no mental conflicts, or moral scruples, or pain of mind, arising from disappointed hopes and joyous expectations ; released from moral obligation, they know nothing of the horrors of a guilty conscience, or of the restraints of law, or of a superior power. But man, hapless man, is doomed to contend with all those ills from which the brutes are so happily exempt. Now as God is wise, and just, and good, he could never suffer all these ills to fall upon his creature man, unless he were a sinner, and the conclusion is, that our whole race is depraved.

Once more—Admitting that God is good—that he has made a revelation of his will to man,—that

he has given his word to guide us to the realms of bliss—his Son to die for our transgressions—his Spirit to help our infirmities—and his gospel to heal all our maladies; how many are there among our faithless race, who “despise the riches of his goodness,” who “deny the Lord that bought them,” who “trample under foot the Son of God, crucify him afresh, and put him to open shame”—whose language is, “We will not have this man to reign over us”—and who say to the Almighty, “Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.” Admitting, we say, that God is good—then to “despise his goodness,” and to become “*haters of God*,” is to fill up the measure of our iniquity, beyond which it seems impossible for us to proceed any farther.

When I think of the horrors of war, the iniquity of the slave trade, the cruelty of pirates on the seas, and robbers on the land, the miseries of intemperance, the abominations of heathenism, the corruptions, the apostacy, the blasphemy, the arrogance, the inhumanity of the church of Rome, the persecution of the faithful in all ages, and the voluntary prostitution of thousands in our large cities: when I hear of deceit, hypocrisy, fraud, injustice, perjury, and profanity in every place, I conclude that our common nature is not only “very far gone from original righteousness,” but in and of itself, is wholly, altogether, entirely, universally, and totally depraved; and if every one of our sinning race is not so in all things, and at all times, in every place, and under every circumstance, I attribute it to the

preventing, converting, renewing, and sanctifying grace of God.

There may be an *apparent* difference in the moral constitution of men; modesty, sensibility, gentleness, kindness, benevolence, integrity, and the love of truth and honesty, may shine with conspicuous lustre in some instances; while in others we can scarcely discover the existence of any such feelings, but on the other hand, pride, petulance, impudence, cruelty, narrow-mindedness, duplicity, and deceitfulness, are always predominant. This difference may be partly hereditary, and partly educational. The influence of opposite and contending principles may also greatly neutralize each other. Excessive pride may operate upon avarice, so as almost to make the miser generous. Excessive diffidence may pass for modesty, and cowardice may pass for kindness. The timorous man may pass for one that is "meek and lowly of heart," and there may be a plentiful share of ambition and vanity where the passion of fear predominates. Principles may also lie dormant, and passions be at rest, for no other reason than a want of opportunity to bring them into exercise. The water of a river may be perfectly pellucid near the surface, while mud, and filth, and every thing else almost, lie placid at the bottom.

The turbulent qualities of our unrenewed nature, may do but little harm, so long as physical and intellectual strength are wanting, but when manhood arrives, they may "burn with an inextinguishable blaze." We esteem some vegetables esculent, so long as they are young and tender, which when

grown old and rank, are accounted poisonous. But the noxious qualities are there, in embryo, at least, or they would not afterwards develope themselves. Probably Nero and Napoleon were as lovely in infancy as other children. It needs not the doctrine of phrenology to account for the characteristic moral qualities of a Herod or an Alexander. The roots of the bumps were there before they grew. All that phrenology did for them was to discover them, and explain their meaning. Tyranny is not confined to imperial power, nor the low, grovelling, and beastly appetites to the "common people." Many a cruel despot will you find, ruling with an iron rod in a district schoolhouse, and in a log cabin, and many a Xantippe among her little playmates, quarrelling and disputing for pre-eminence.

It must be granted that to be gentle, and generous, and upright, is not to be virtuous in the Christian sense, unless we are so in the sight of God, and in reference to Him. For a man of slender appetite to be temperate and occasionally abstemious, is in itself no mark of his being a spiritual man. A man may live in outward peace with his brother, and at the same time hate him in his heart. He may pass for a good citizen among men, while at the same time he is a murderer in the sight of God. "Thou shalt not steal," is a well known precept, but it may be observed from widely different motives. It is possible to do many things which God has enjoined, and to refrain from doing many things which He has forbidden, from motives widely different from a desire to please God; and when the love of God is as absent from our hearts as the name of God is

from our thoughts; when the glory of God is as much out of the question as God himself is out of our sight.

There is also another precept, equally as clear and positive as “Thou shalt not steal,” viz. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself.” And now the question is, “Can a man, in his unregenerate state, fulfil this command?” We assert that as there is in every human body the principles of decay and the seeds of dissolution, so there is in every human heart the principles of revolt and rebellion against God. In the most healthy and beautiful, there are the seeds of death, as well as in the most diseased and most deformed; so in the most amiable of unregenerate men, as well as in all others, the carnal mind, which is enmity against God, exists. But if this be so, how shall we account for the supposed difference among men? Observe, the difference is not so great in *reality* as it is in *appearance*. That amiable and lovely creature, the idol of unregenerate men, so much esteemed for “the transcendent beauty of her person,” and for the “native goodness of her heart,” may be as unlovely in the sight of God as the murderer himself! Strange as it may appear, this lovely creature may be an *idolater*, not in the *grossest*, but in the *strictest* sense of the word—she may be a perfect adorer of her own comeliness—the *toilet* may be her *altar*, at which she may pay her every day’s devotions, and herself the *idol* all the time. And which, we ask, is the greater sin, *idolatry* or *murder*? Among men, the latter, no doubt, but in the sight of God, the former, no question!

in the decalogue, there are two commands against idolatry to one against murder. The idolater breaks the “first and greatest command,” consequently idolatry in the sight of God is the greater sin. The difference therefore is more in appearance than in reality.

But admitting that there is a difference in temper and disposition, it does not follow that the more amiable among men will be more inclined to love God than the less amiable. There is a great difference in the natural temper and disposition of brutes ; but they cannot be said to love God, because they have a good disposition ; and the same may be said of men, for what is man in his unrenewed state, in himself considered, or separate from the grace of God ? To say the truth, *he is half a brute and half a demon !* What better was that man, who, in the town of Wethersfield, some years since, first murdered his whole family, and then himself ? But the crime of that infuriated man was a *virtue* in comparison of the crime of the *merciless slave trader*, the *unprincipled warrior*, and the *cruel persecutor* of God’s people ; and if Universalism be true, he was a *saint* of the first order, in comparison of the Nimrods, and Alexanders, and Herods, and Neros, of olden time ; for he not only did the will of God with all his might, but finished the business at once—sent his family to heaven, and then went himself—leaving no one on earth to mourn ; while they, in proportion to their increase of power, have multiplied their crimes, and spread desolation and misery to an almost infinite extent. His conduct, in despite of every consideration, ex-

cited so much horror, that none but maniacs will be found to imitate it, while theirs, having the sanction of law and of nations, and being arrayed in all the false glory of kingly power and earthly grandeur, and they themselves, by their extraordinary wickedness, having obtained the epithet "GREAT," will find admirers and imitators in every despot throughout the world.

The following graphic sketch of the lapsed state of man, is taken from Mr. Howe's "Living Temple," a work lately published in this country.

"That God hath withdrawn himself, and left this his temple desolate, we have many sad and plain proofs before us. The stately ruins are visible to every eye, and bear in their front this doleful inscription, "*Here God once dwelt.*" Enough appears of the admirable structure of the soul of man to show that the divine presence did sometimes dwell in it; more than enough of vicious deformity, to proclaim, "*He is now retired and gone.*" The lamps are extinct; the altar overturned; the light and love are now vanished, which once did shine with such heavenly brightness, and burn with such pious fervor. The golden candlestick is displaced, to make room for the throne of the prince of darkness. The sacred incense, which once sent up its rich perfumes, is exchanged for a poisonous, hellish vapor. The comely order of his house is all turned into confusion; the beauties of holiness into noisome impurities; the house of prayer into a den of thieves—thieves of the worst kind; for every lust is a thief, and every theft is a sacrilege. The noble powers which were designed and dedicated to

divine contemplation and delight in God, are alienated to the service of the most despicable idols, and employed in the vilest embraces; to behold and admire lying vanities; to indulge and cherish lust and wickedness.

“There is not now a system and entire table of coherent truths to be found, or a frame of holiness; but some shivered parcels. And if any with great toil and labor apply themselves to draw out here one piece, and there another, and set them together, they serve rather to show how exquisite the divine workmanship was in the original composition, than to the excellent purposes for which the whole was at first designed. Some pieces agree, and own one another; but how soon are our inquiries nonplussed and superseded! How many attempts have been made, since that fearful fall and ruin of this fabric, to compose again the truths of so many several kinds into their distinct orders, and make up frames of science or useful knowledge! And after so many ages, nothing is finished in any kind. Sometimes truths are misplaced, and what belongs to one kind is transferred to another, where it will not fitly match; sometimes falsehood inserted, which shatters or disturbs the whole frame. And what with much fruitless pain is done by one hand, is dashed in pieces by another; and it is the work of a following age, to sweep away the fine-spun cobwebs of a former. And those truths which are of greatest use, though not most out of sight, are least regarded; their tendency and design are overlooked, or they are so loosened and torn off, that they cannot be wrought in, so as to

take hold of the soul, but hover as faint, ineffectual notions, that signify nothing.

“Its very fundamental powers are shaken and disjointed, and their order toward one another confounded and broken; so that what is judged considerable, is not considered; what is recommended as lovely and eligible, is not loved and chosen. Yea, ‘the truth which is after godliness,’ is not so much disbelieved, as hated, or ‘held in unrighteousness;’ and shines with too feeble a light in that malignant darkness which ‘comprehends it not.’ You come, amidst all this confusion, into the ruined palace of some great prince, in which you see, here the fragments of a noble pillar, there the shattered pieces of some curious imagery, all lying neglected and useless among heaps of dirt. He that invites you to take a view of the soul of man, gives you but such another prospect, and doth but say to you, ‘Behold the desolation,’ all things rude and waste! So that, should there be any pretence to the divine presence, it might be said, ‘If God be here, why is it thus?’ The faded glory, the darkness, the disorder, the impurity, the decayed state in all respects of this temple, too plainly show ‘the Great Inhabitant is gone!’”

But if such be the true picture of human nature, where is there any ground of hope for the children of men? Not in and of themselves, nor from themselves, most surely! But in Him alone who “was wounded for our transgressions, who was bruised for our iniquities, who himself bare our sins in his own body on the tree, by whose stripes we are, or may be healed.” Here, and here only, is our

hope—in *the sacrificial death of Christ*, through whom, and to whom, with the Father and Spirit Eternal, be all honor and glory ascribed, world without end. Amen.

See Watson's Institutes, Wesley's Works, Fletchers' Appeal, Bates' Harmony, Boston's Four-fold State, and Chalmer's Discourses on this subject.

LECTURE IX.

ON THE ATONEMENT.

“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.—Rom. v. 8—11.

“ATONEMENT,” says Mr. Watson, in his Biblical Dictionary, is “the satisfaction offered to divine justice by the death of Christ, for the sins of mankind, by virtue of which, all true penitents who believe in Christ are personally reconciled to God, are freed from the penalty of their sins, and entitled to eternal life.”

“An atonement,” says Jenkyn, in his treatise on this subject, “is any provision introduced into the administration of a government, instead of the infliction of the punishment of an offender—any expedient that will justify a government in suspending the literal execution of the penalty threatened—any

consideration that fills the place of punishment, and answers the purpose of government as effectually as the infliction of the penalty on the offender himself would ; and thus supplies to the government just, safe, and honorable grounds for offering and dispensing pardon to the offender. This definition or description may be more concisely expressed, thus :—*Atonement is an expedient substituted in the place of the literal infliction of the threatened penalty, so as to supply to the government just and good grounds for dispensing favors to an offender.*”

The foregoing definition is thus happily illustrated by two remarkable circumstances, one taken from the Holy Scriptures, the other from profane history.

“The first instance is that mentioned in the book of Daniel. King Darius had established a royal statute, that whosoever should ask a petition of any god or man for thirty days, save of the king himself, should be cast into the den of lions. Daniel was the first offender. And when the king heard thereof, he was sore displeased with himself, and set his heart on delivering Daniel ; and labored till the going down of the sun to deliver him, but could not : so Daniel was cast into the den of lions.

“Here is an instance of an absolute sovereign, setting his heart on the deliverance of an offender, and laboring to obtain it ; and yet prevented from exercising his clemency by a due sense of the honor of his government. But could not Darius have *pardoned* Daniel ? Yes : as a private person he could forgive any private injury ; but, as a public officer, he could not privately forgive a public offence.

Could he not then *repeal* the law which he had made? Yes: but not with honor to the laws of the Medes and Persians. No expedient could be found to save Daniel, and therefore, the same lips that enacted the law, commanded that Daniel should be cast into the den of lions.

“ But why was this done? Not because the king had no mercy in him, but simply because no expedient could be found which would at once preserve the honor of the government, and allow the exercise of clemency toward the offender. Daniel was cast into the lions’ den, merely because *no atonement* was found to vindicate and to *show forth* the public justice of the governor in his deliverance. Here, then, is an instance of mercy being withheld, merely from the want of an honorable ground of *expressing* it.

“ The other instance is that of the son of Zaleucus, king of the Locrians, mentioned by Ælian, an Italian historian. This king established a law against adultery, the penalty of which was, that the offender should lose both eyes. The first person found guilty of this offence was the king’s own son. Zaleucus felt as a father toward his own son, but he felt likewise as a king towards his government. If he, from blind indulgence, forgive his son, with what reason can he expect the law to be respected by the rest of his subjects? and how will his public character appear in punishing any future offender? If he repeal the law, he will brand his character with dishonor—for *selfishness*, in sacrificing the public good of a whole community to his private feelings; for *weakness*, in publishing a law whose penalty he could not inflict; and for *foolishness*, in introducing a

law, the bearings of which he had never contemplated. This would make his authority, for the future, a mere name. "The case was a difficult one. Though he was an offended governor, he had the compassion of a tender father. At the suggestion of his unbribed mercy, he employed his mind and wisdom to devise a measure, an expedient, through the medium of which he would save his son and magnify his law, and make it honorable. The expedient was this : the king himself would lose one eye, and the offender should lose another. By this means, the honor of his law was preserved unsullied, and the clemency of his heart was extended to the offender. Every subject in the government, when he heard of the king's conduct, would feel assured that the king esteemed his law very highly ; and though the offender did not suffer the entire penalty, yet the clemency shown him was exercised in such a way, that no adulterer would ever think of escaping with impunity. Every historian or reporter of the fact would say, that the king spared not his own eye that he might spare his offending child with honor. He would assert that this sacrifice of the king's eye, completely demonstrated his abhorrence of adultery, and his regard for the law, as effectually, as if the penalty had been literally executed upon the sinner himself. The impression on the public mind would be that this expedient of the father was *an atonement for the offence of the son*, and was a just and honorable ground for pardoning him.

"Such an expedient in the moral government of God, the apostles asserted the death of Christ to be. They preached that all men were condemned alrea-

dy,—that God had thoughts of peace, and not of evil toward them,—that these thoughts were to be exercised in such a manner as not to destroy the law, and that the medium or expedient for doing this, was the sacrifice of his *only Son*, as an atonement to public justice for the sins of men.”

In the text under consideration, the word, according to Drs. Coke and Clarke, should be rendered *reconciliation*, and if so, then we shall not find the word *atonement* any where in the New Testament.

This circumstance, probably, has caused some persons to deny the doctrine entirely. But, as one observes, “if we deny the doctrine of *atonement*, we had better renounce the scriptures at once, for if we cancel this doctrine, the conduct of the old Testament saints, in their sacrifices, appears like that of fools, and the service of the sanctuary is more like a slaughter-house than the temple of God.”

By referring to Dr. Clarke’s note on Luke xviii. 13, any one may see, however, that there is a word in the Greek version of the Scriptures which contains this doctrine. And any one who will take the pains to look into Mr. Watson’s Dictionary, under the articles, Atonement, Expiation, Propitiation, Reconciliation, Redemption, and Sacrifice, will see that it is a New Testament and an evangelical doctrine.

In the text under consideration, the doctrine is evidently implied : For, 1st. Here is an exhibition of the love of God to a fallen world ;—“ *God commendeth his love toward us, while we were yet sinners.*”—2ndly, The manner in which that love was expressed, is here plainly stated ;—“ *Christ died for us.*”—

3dly. The time of this act of God's love to us is stated ;—" *while we were yet sinners*"—" *when we were enemies.*"—4thly. The effect of this expression of God's love is set forth, viz. *reconciliation* ;—" *when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.*"—5thly. The precise nature of this *reconciliation* is defined, viz. *justification* ;—" *being now justified.*" 6thly. The true cause of our reconciliation, or justification, is pointed out ;—" *by his blood.*" And it is here, in this very clause, "*justified by his blood* ;—that we think the doctrine in question is contained ; for if it be true that "*without shedding of blood there is no remission,*" then it is also true that "*God hath set forth Christ to be a propitiation,*" that "*through faith in his blood,*" we might be justified.

This, then, is the true notion of the doctrine of atonement ;—" *Christ shed his blood to atone for our sins* ; and through faith in his blood we obtain "the remission of sins that are past," and herein "God is just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." (Heb. ix. 22—26. Rom. iii. 25, 26.)

But though we are "reconciled" or "justified," though we have "received the atonement," we are not yet fully saved ; for the apostle says, "*being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him ; being reconciled by his death, we shall be saved by his life.*"

Hence it appears that the death of Christ is properly a propitiatory sacrifice—an atonement for sin. By it, the guilt of Adam's transgression is removed, and every impediment in the way of our salvation is taken out of the way. By the death of Christ we

are reconciled to God ;—" God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their former trespasses unto them." The original offence is atoned for, and provision is made for the pardon of actual transgressions. By the death of Christ we are saved from the imputation of Adam's sin,—we are no longer accounted guilty in consequence of his transgression. But if we have committed actual sins, in our own proper person, we are guilty, and can only be saved from wrath through him, and that only on condition of faith in his atoning sacrifice.

Mr. Watson seems to think that infants are not born justified. But if they are not guilty, are they not necessarily justified ? His words are, " As to infants, they are not, indeed, born justified and regenerate." Had he said simply, " they are not born regenerate," and left out the word " justified," I cannot but think he would have been nearer the truth. Christ, when speaking of infants, says, " Of *such* is the kingdom of heaven." (Mark x. 14.) And in another place, he says to adults, " Except ye be converted, and become *as little children*, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. xviii. 3.) In the same paragraph, still speaking of infants, Mr. Watson says, " they are all born under the *free gift*, the effect of the righteousness of one which extended to all men ; and this *free gift* is bestowed on them *in order to* justification of life." What Mr. W. means by saying " *in order to* justification of life," seems to be explained by the following words,—"*the adjudging of the condemned to live.*" But how this differs from being justified, or

being in a state of justification, I cannot see. If *adjudged to live*, they certainly are not *condemned to die*, and if not condemned to die, why not say they are justified? For my own part, I can see no difference between being justified and being adjudged to live; and therefore conclude that infants are justified, or cleared from the guilt of Adam's transgression, through the redemption that is in Jesus, who is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. The condition of infants seems to differ so little from that of justified persons, that their states seem to be almost, if not perfectly, parallel. The justified person is not condemned, neither is the infant. The justified person is not wholly sanctified, neither is the infant.

The true state of the case appears to be this—man comes into the world *depraved*, but not *guilty*. By natural generation, he is related to a fallen Adam, and consequently is depraved. This depravity is generally called *original sin*; but it is rather the *effect* of original sin, than original sin itself. Original sin is properly that “offence” of which the Apostle speaks in the 5th chapter of Romans, and our depravity is the effect of that offence. In consequence of our relation to Adam, we are all depraved; but by virtue of the redemption paid by Christ, we enjoy an infantile justification, until we become actual transgressors of God's law. But if Christ has taken away the imputation of Adam's transgression, how shall we establish the doctrine of “Original Sin,” as it is generally called?—how shall we avoid the errors of Pelagianism?—how shall we establish the doctrine of *total depravity*?

For an answer to these questions, let us appeal to facts, and to the word of God.

First, then, it is a fact, that *all mankind are mortal*—ALL DIE! But how is this? No other answer can be given than that which is given in the word of God—"all have sinned." Sinned, how?—sinned in Adam! No reasonable account can be given for the introduction of death into the world, but on the ground of the original offence—the sin of Adam! Secondly, it is a fact, that *all mankind bring into the world with them the germs of moral evil*. Two passages of Holy Writ are sufficient to prove these two points. 1st. "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners." (Rom. v. 19.) 2d. "And so death hath passed upon all men, for all have sinned." (Rom. v. 12.)

From this fruitful source, this overflowing fountain of native depravity, flows all the streams of moral pollution that have defiled man's heart, or troubled the world; and it is in consequence of this that man, in every condition of life, from his cradle to his grave, and from his birth to his death, either sins, or is liable to sin, in thought, word, and deed, every moment. Hence it becomes a question of vital importance, how sin may be forgiven, and the fountain of corruption dried up, and our moral nature so purified as to be fit for heaven. From the history of mankind it is evident, that all the works, pilgrimages, penances, ablutions, purgations, and torments that man can perform, invent, suffer, or endure, cannot atone for sin, or wash away human guilt; it remains, therefore, if sin be taken away, it must be by the substitution of the innocent for the guilty.

A breach has been made between man and his

Maker, by the original offence—the sin of our first parents. The effects of this breach is felt by all their posterity, in all ages, places, and circumstances. Man cannot of himself repair this breach, or heal this wound. A Mediator is necessary, who shall lay his hand upon both—upon God the offended, and upon man the offender. He must be one of equal dignity with the offended, or how shall he be thought worthy to negotiate a peace with Him. Who ever heard of a traitor making intercession for a murderer, or of a murderer making intercession for a robber, or for himself in his own name? How then shall man atone for his own sins, or for those of his fellow men? No; a mediator is necessary, and he must be on a level with both parties, and a friend of both. He must be equal with God, and on a level with man. But man alone cannot atone for the sin of man, because there is no merit in any thing he can do or suffer, and God being wholly spiritual, cannot bleed and die; therefore, the mediator must be both God and man united in one person, in order to suffer meritoriously—to satisfy the claims of divine justice, and to procure pardon for the guilty.

Such a one we have in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was equal with the Father in eternity, power, and glory. Of this fact we are assured by the inspired testimony of holy writ. He is the Creator of all things, visible and invisible. He was with God in the beginning. He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. He is the proprietor of all things, for all things were made by him and for him. All souls are his by right of

creation, for He is the Creator of all things. And He who was thus equal with God in name, attributes, works, rights, possessions, and all possible perfections, “made himself of no reputation, but took upon him the form of a servant, and was found in fashion as a man, and humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” “He who was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might become rich.” In these several passages of scripture, we have all that is necessary to demonstrate the proper divinity and the proper humanity of Christ, and the great work for which he became incarnate. He was rich, as God; as man, he was poor. He was, as to his divine nature, equal with God; as to his human nature, he was on a level with man, sin excepted, and the great object of his voluntary humility was that we might be rich. Nothing is more clear than that Christ suffered; and it is equally clear that He, the just and holy One, suffered not for his own sins, but for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.

A few passages of scripture, tending to show that Christ died *for us—on our account—in our stead—as a substitute*, in the proper sense of those words and phrases, are here inserted. .

“He was wounded *for our transgressions*; he was bruised *for our iniquities*”—“*for the transgression of my people was he stricken.*” “When thou shalt make his soul *an offering for sin.*” “The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” “He bare the sin of many, and made intercession *for the transgressors.* (Isaiah, liii. 5—12.) “And after three-score and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but

not for himself." (Dan. ix. 26.) Christ himself testifies that, "he gave his life *a ransom for many*," (Matt. xx. 28;) and St. Paul declares that "he gave himself *a ransom for all*." (1 Tim. ii. 6.) The apostle to the Hebrews states that Jesus, who "was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, was crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should *taste death for every man*." (Heb. ii. 9.) The same apostle, in another part of this epistle, remarks, "but now, once in the end of the world hath he appeared, *to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself*." (Heb. ix. 26.) In his epistle to the Romans, St. Paul asserts that "*Christ died for the ungodly*," and in another place, that he was "*delivered for our offences*;" and in another, that "*he died for all*, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that *died for them*." St. John, in his epistles, declares that "He was manifested to take away *our sins*," and that "he is the propitiation *for our sins*, and not for ours only, but *for the sins of the whole world*."

In further confirmation of the doctrine of atonement, it may be well to bear in mind,

1. That God is our rightful sovereign; that He is just and holy, as well as merciful and gracious.

2. That he has a right to the perfect and unceasing obedience of all his creatures; and,

3. That they may know what is the measure of their obedience, he has given them a law, which, like himself, is spiritual, holy, just, and good.

4. That a law is of no use, nor of any force, without a penalty affixed—that God has a right to fix what penalty soever he please—he being the only

correct judge in the case, and that whatever that penalty be, it must, in the nature of things, be just, for God can do nothing wrong.

5. That the penalty of which we speak, is eternal death.

6. That the honor of God, and the honor of his law, require one or other of two things; either the death of the offender or a substitute.

7. That the provision made for the pardon of the offender, if any such provision be made, must be such as shall magnify the law—prevent sin—secure obedience, and promote the honor of the offended, and the eternal happiness of the pardoned.

The doctrine of atonement, we think, provides for all these—it acknowledges the sovereignty of God—it proclaims the dignity of his law—it exposes the malignity of sin—it does not lower the standard of obedience—it maintains the justness of the penalty—it secures the honor of the offended, and the pardon, peace, and eternal happiness of the offender.

The following remarks will set this matter in a very clear light. “Between the character of God and the nature of his government, there is a close and striking relation. In every transaction, and in all the provisions for particular cases in that government, we recognize the manifestation of some perfection, or perfections, of his nature. Not only are his various measures referable to his different perfections, but the very necessity for their adoption is clearly deducible, from the nature of the perfections to which they are to be referred. Of these

remarks the gospel atonement furnishes ample illustration and proof.

“The necessity of an atonement arises from the moral condition of men, and the relations subsisting between the holiness, justice, and mercy of God. If any of these attributes were absent from the divine nature, his character and government might be perfectly consistent with each other, without such an expedient.

“If holiness were annihilated, justice, it is presumed, could not remain. Among men, it is true, the practice of justice may sometimes be found, where holiness, perhaps, can have had no share in producing it. The probity and fidelity which appear in the transactions of some persons, whose dispositions in other respects are evidently depraved, may be in reality a kind of dissimulation, produced by motives of worldly interest and honor, while the genuine principles of justice have no place in their hearts. But this can never be the case with God. No motives derived from objects unconnected with his own nature, can ever influence him. His justice is the love of what is morally right, for its own sake, originating in the rectitude or holiness of his nature.

“Again, if justice in the divine Being were extinct, such is the relative character of mercy, that it could not independently exist. If there were no justice, there could be, strictly speaking, no mercy. A deity devoid of justice, would be regardless of the moral conduct of his creatures, and therefore would feel no concern, on the ground of right and wrong, at least, to give them a law for the regulation of

their lives. Now, if there were no law, there could be no transgression; if no transgression, no guilt; if no guilt, no desert of punishment, and therefore no exercise of mercy. Mercy without justice, then, would lose its proper character, and degenerate into a moral indifference, which would lead to an indulgent connivance at sin, and strongly indicate a defect of holiness, without which there could be neither justice nor mercy.

“On the other hand, a deity destitute of mercy, adopting a mode of procedure corresponding with his nature, would conduct his government on the principles of inexorable and unmitigated justice, and uniformly punish transgressors according to their guilt.

“From this view of the attributes referred to, it appears that not one of them, if existing and operating singly, would select a mode of government in which the Christian atonement would be needed. One of them would require no atonement of any description; the others would require every sinner to atone for his own crimes, by enduring the penalty deserved. But if we form our views on this subject from the representations of Scripture; if we consider the divine perfections as existing and operating in union and harmony, we shall perceive that the atonement of Christ is as necessary in the case which actually exists, as it would be needless in the cases supposed.

“Were we to examine all the conceivable systems of divine administration in which the atonement might be consistently dispensed with, we should find, most probably, that every one of them would

imply the extinction, or at least, the dormancy, of some of the divine perfections. Perhaps the whole of those conceivable systems are, as to their effect, resolvable into some of the following. Either, 1st, to take no cognizance of human actions at all ; or, 2dly, which is nearly the same, to pardon indiscriminately all offenders, on the ground of prerogative ; or, 3dly, to subject every criminal to inevitable punishment ; or, 4thly, arbitrarily to punish some, and forgive others, without regard to their criminality ; or 5thly, to punish the most flagitious, and pardon the rest ; or, 6thly, to pardon transgressors only in case of repentance and reformation.

“ As to the first of these instances, it is presumed, not the boldest denier of the atonement will be disposed to give it a place in his creed.

“ As the second scheme is, in tendency, the same as the first, it is liable to the same objections. Both of them exclude the justice of the Divine Being from all share in his dispensations ; and neither of them is calculated either to bring glory to God, or to prevent wickedness, anarchy, and wretchedness among men. What stronger inducement to crime could be offered to men, than the assurance that no penalty could be incurred ?

“ To punish the whole offending race, without affording them any opportunity of escape, according to the third scheme, would as effectually exclude the mercy of God from his government, as the two former would his justice and holiness. A measure like this would give a most appalling display of the divine character. And, as the subjects of such a governor could have no inducements to love him,

their obedience, if they tendered any, would be extorted from fear, instead of flowing spontaneously from the nobler principle of love.

“ Nor will the fourth instance, though exhibiting, in its general aspect, a mixture of justice and mercy, be exempted, when impartially considered, from a charge as severe as those preferred against the preceding systems. For though, in the arbitrary and irrespective punishment of some, and forgiveness of others, justice and mercy would both be brought into exercise, in reference to mankind, as a whole race, yet their exercise would never be combined in any single act, nor in reference to any single individual. The treatment of one part of mankind would be all justice, and of the other part all mercy. To the honor of the divine rectitude, it is said in scripture, that God is no respecter of persons. This impartiality forms certainly an important branch of his justice ; and hence the hypothesis which supposes this principle thus excluded from the conduct of the deity, supposes that, at least, a partial violation of justice is exhibited in the whole of his government. Beside, what ends worthy of his wisdom could be answered by such a method ? It would have no tendency whatever, either to promote virtue, or prevent vice. The fate of the sufferers depending not on their own actions, but upon the mere will of their Maker, their lives could not be exemplary ; and it would be to them a question of no importance, whether, in future, they were righteous or wicked.

“ In the fifth instance, it is true, we perceive something like an approximation to just and rational gov-

ernment. To hold up, as monuments of justice, the deeply criminal, would, in some degree, be calculated to awe the wicked. And to spare the less guilty, would bear some resemblance to that exercise of regal prerogative by which a human governor averts the penal stroke from those whose crimes have been attended by extenuating circumstances. But still this system is far from possessing the perfection to be expected from infinite wisdom. It is here implied, that there is in human crimes, on account of their number or enormity, a difference of demerit. Some are supposed to be venial, others unpardonable. Now, this distinction must be defined according to some established rule ; and this rule must either be published to mankind, or be kept a secret in the mind of the Deity. If it were published to mankind, they would have no restraint whatever, from the commission of what might be called minor sins. They would know, that, to a certain extent, they might sin with impunity ; and, till the measure of their iniquity were full, they would feel no apprehension of danger. But their presumption of safety, would induce them to indulge in habits which would give an increasing acceleration to their progress in vice, till, by a kind of necessity of their own imposing, they would, in ten thousand instances, be carried beyond the bounds of safety before they were aware.

“ If, on the other hand, this rule were kept a secret in the mind of the Deity, mankind would consequently judge of their state according to the most probable rule which themselves could devise. Accustomed to estimate every thing comparatively,

men would compare themselves with others. In proportion, therefore, as public morals degenerated, the standard of character would be altered in favor of vice ; and no man would think himself wicked, so long as he conceived that others more wicked could be found. That universal selfish prejudice, too, which ever exerts its influence to soften a person's verdict upon his own character, would whisper peace under all circumstances.

“ We come now to consider the last of the cases supposed, which is certainly more plausible than any of the rest ; and, as it is the only one, perhaps, for which any sensible and well-informed person will contend, it demands a more serious consideration. In this instance, we must confess, there is, in several respects, an accordance with, what we believe to be, truth. That repentance is necessary, and that none but the penitent can be pardoned, are doctrines perfectly scriptural, and fully calculated to suppress every false hope of salvation in those who are not heartily renouncing sin. But though this is, perhaps, the best system which human wisdom could devise, it is not, we conceive, the best that is possible, since it is not the system which appears to be revealed in the gospel. Between this system and the system of the gospel, let us, however, institute an impartial comparison, and then it will at once be seen on which side the excellence lies, and whether of the two appears most worthy of the ever blessed God.

“ While the former system shows mercy, it does not sufficiently support the dignity, the awfulness and the claims of justice. Repentance is the only

condition required, on the part of any one, in order to his forgiveness. It must, therefore, be considered as being either an equivalent to full obedience, or an atonement for crime ; if not, the claims of justice, as to the time spent in wickedness, are totally set aside.

“ If, in opposition to this assumption, it should be said, that the Divine Being acts simply in reference to the general welfare of his creatures, and that, therefore, if that object be accomplished, it is mere trifling to talk about the claims of this or that perfection ; we reply, the requirement of repentance only, as the condition of pardon, is not calculated to answer the end proposed. Never will the mind be influenced to moral propriety, on which happiness is allowed to depend, unless it be deeply impressed with the importance of obedience, and the evil of transgression. But in this system there is nothing to produce such an impression. What real importance can there be in obedience, if a total defalcation in the discharge of duty for a long series of years can be passed by without notice, if the defaulter only repent ? Or what can there be odious in the nature, or very dreadful in the consequences of sin, if all the evil can be averted by repentance ?

“ Beside, how can even the Divine veracity be raised above suspicion, if God, in the very act of justifying the ungodly, be not unequivocally declared to be just ? Might not the sinner reason with himself thus ? Surely the principles of justice, in general, must be, in the estimation of God, as important and indispensable as the principles of truth,

which form but a part of justice. If, then, justice has been so far relaxed that pardon is offered to the penitent, without the adoption of any method in which the demands of justice are sufficiently recognized and asserted, may it not also be so far relaxed, that ultimately even the impenitent may either entirely, or in part, escape the punishment denounced against them? The moral influence of a system, from which such inferences are deducible, must be too feeble to promote the obedience, the order, and the happiness of mankind.

“ From all these defects, the system, embracing the atonement, is free. While mercy is exercised to the sinner, justice is preserved inviolate, as far as its moral influence in the divine government is concerned. The importance of obedience, and the heinousness of sin, are exhibited in the most striking and influential manner. The violation of God’s law is never forgiven without a full recognition, both on the part of God and men, of the indispensable requirements of justice. In addition to repentance toward God, the gospel requires faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. This is an act emphatically expressive of the great obligations of man, the deep demerit of his sin, and the terrible degree of misery he has justly incurred. The humble penitent comes to the throne of grace, and, with his eyes streaming with tears of godly sorrow for his past conduct, he pours forth his confessions and supplications to God. He beholds the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, and O, how the sight affects his heart. He sees the well-beloved Son of God, by his Father’s gracious appointment, and his

own voluntary choice, made a sacrifice for sinners, and his mind is filled with self-aborrence for his sin, with awe at the justice, and astonishment at the love, of the Supreme Being. The sorrows of the Saviour through life, his agony in the garden, and his tortures and death upon Calvary, when connect with the immaculate purity and illustrious dignity of the sufferer, assume an infinite and awful significance. He views them as being not only the meritorious cause of the sinner's salvation, but also as a representation in specimen, of the dreadful misery which, but for the Saviour's interposition, would inevitably have proved his fate. He, therefore, while pleading for mercy, lays his hand of faith upon this vicarious sufferer, and confesses that his sins have deserved a punishment as great as that sustained by his substitute, with all the augmentation derived from the infinite dignity and worthiness of his person. While contemplating the peculiar death of Christ, discovers the most interesting, and calculated to influence his heart and conduct, open to his view. In that death, he discovers a manifestation of the *wisdom* of God. How admirably has he adapted his means to the circumstances of his creatures, and the purposes of his government. In that death he discovers an expression of the *goodness* of God. Such, it is seen, was his regard for mankind, that he was willing to make the greatest possible sacrifice, in order that they might receive the greatest possible blessings. While a believer properly considers this fact, how can he remain insensible of his obligations, or unmoved to grateful obedience by so much kindness? In that death he discovers a dis-

play of the *justice* of God. So important, and inde-feasible, it appears, are its rights, that mercy could not be extended to sinners without the death of a suitable substitute. Is it possible for a person, under the impression of such a view of divine justice, to disregard its imperative demands, and to live in opposition to its precepts? He dare not expose himself to the consequences. God has threatened that tribulation and anguish shall fall upon every soul of man that doeth evil, and in the death of Christ, the believer discovers a striking pledge of the *veracity* of God. He sees that this perfection must engage him to execute every purpose declared to mankind. Aware that there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, and that, therefore, the gospel dispensation is the last and the only expedient of mercy, he knows that if he should trample under foot the blood of the covenant, there would remain to him nothing but a fearful looking-for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversary. *For if God spared not his OWN SON, but freely delivered him up for us all, to render our salvation possible, how shall he spare the wicked rebel, by whom his mercy is finally slighted, and his justice defied?*

“From this comparative view of the different systems which, under the existing circumstances of mankind, are possible, we perceive that the system distinguished by the atonement, is the only one that gives a full display of the Divine character, and that furnishes sufficient motives for the obedience of men. It is the only system in which the glory of God is not eclipsed; the only one in which his perfections appear in harmonious exercise. In every

other we discover something unworthy of some attribute of the Deity. But in this, each of his perfections shines forth in all its splendor, and the commingling rays of the whole, form around his character a halo of glory, which cannot fail to strike with astonishment, dispose to adoration, and prompt to obedience, the mind of every true believer. As the name of Jesus Christ, then, is the only name given among men, whereby we must be saved, let it be our *wisdom here*, with all our hearts, to embrace him, that it may be our *happiness hereafter* to behold his face in glory, and mingle with the spirits of just men made perfect, to swell the grateful chorus, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and hath redeemed us to God by his blood, to receive riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing, for ever and ever.' **

"The doctrine of vicarious punishment, or atonement for sin, may be traced to the general sense of mankind, and the tradition of all ages. The Brahminical philosophers of India, and the ancient Druids of Northern Europe, nations the most remote from each other, concurred in this sentiment. It is well known to every one who has the least acquaintance with the mythology of the heathens, how strongly and universally they retained the tradition of an atonement or expiation for sin, although they expected it from a false object and wrong means. Hence the origin of human sacrifices, a dreadful perversion of the primeval worship, leading to the most sanguinary cruelty, of which instances are re-

* Imperial Magazine, for Nov. 1829.

corded among all nations, and of which the history of modern heathens confirms the statements of ancient historians. Thus we have at once strong proofs of the antiquity of sacrifice ; while the perversion of it shows the depravity of the race of man, and his need of a Mediator.” (*Clarke on 2d Kings*, xvii. 41, and *Luke* xviii. 13.)

“ Without shedding of blood there is no remission, was the loud and constant cry of the whole Levitical economy, but the spirit of infidelity which prompts some men to reject the revelation of God altogether, has led others, while they professed to receive that revelation with gratitude and humility, to deny and explain away its peculiar and distinguishing truths. And hence the evangelical doctrine of atonement for sin by the death of Christ, notwithstanding the glory which it reflects upon the divine character and government, and the great and endless comfort which it brings to the penitent sinner, has been strenuously opposed ; and all the arts of metaphysical reasoning, and verbal criticism, have been resorted to, for the purpose of persuading mankind that there is no more atoning virtue in the blood of Christ than in their own tears. Errors on this subject are likely to lead to the most fatal results, for if those who deny the Lord that **BOUGHT THEM**, bring upon themselves swift destruction, and if the grand condition of our personal justification before God, be faith in the blood of Christ, as the apostle states, (*Rom. iii. 25*,) those who regard that blood as a *common thing*, are left in a situation, the peril of which no language can fully describe.” (*Rev. T. Jackson.*)

But if the doctrine of atonement be a scriptural doctrine, as it surely is, then how firm is the hope of the christian! Well might the Apostle say, "*Christ is all!*" All who have committed their cause to him, have proved him to be faithful to his word; his mercy has lightened upon them according to their trust in him. All believers unite in proclaiming Him to be "the help of the helpless—the hope of the hopeless—the health of the sick—the strength of the weak—the riches of the poor—the peace of the disquieted—the comfort of the afflicted—the light of those that sit in darkness—the companion of the desolate—the friend of the friendless—the way of the bewildered—the wisdom of the foolish—the righteousness of the ungodly—the sanctification of the unholy—the redemption of the captives—the joy of mourners—the glory of the infamous, and *the salvation of the lost!*" To Him be glory, for ever and ever, Amen.

For further illustration of this all-important subject, the reader is respectfully referred to Mr. Watson's Theological Institutes, and Biblical and Theological Dictionary—to Dr. A. Clarke's Sermons—to a Sermon by the Rev. R. Hall on Isaiah liii. 8.—to Dr. Bates' Harmony of the Divine Attributes, and especially to a work by T. W. Jenkyn.

THE PIOUS MUTE.

The following interesting, instructive, and authentic narrative, taken from the Glasgow Monthly Visitor, affords a beautiful and convincing argument in support of the Christian doctrine of Atonement. The account was furnished by his teacher.

“John B—— was deaf and dumb. His parents were poor, and had no means of affording him any instruction. He was brought to me by a little companion, also deaf and dumb, in October, 1823. He was then more than eleven years old, but looked scarcely nine.

“He had been taught to bow down before a crucifix, and to pictures and images; but he saw they were made of wood and paper, and of course he paid them no real honor; nor as yet had any idea entered his mind of the existence of a Supreme Being. In proof of this, one of the first questions that he contrived to put to me was, whether I had made the sun and moon.

“It would be impossible to trace all the steps by which I was enabled to convey to him the grand truth, that there existed ONE, far above, out of his sight, more glorious than the orb of day, who made that orb, and all the objects on which he so delighted to gaze—the starry heavens—the rivers—the hills and vales—the green grass, and all that walked upon it—the birds, and the butterflies—the gliding fish, and all that people the universe. It was when he first laid hold on this reality, that his mind seemed to be truly born; it evidently filled the vacuum in his spirit, threw a sunshine over all his contemplations; and I have no hesitation in saying, he valued

every enjoyment, even down to the most ordinary comfort and convenience of life, more as the gift of his Creator, than because of the personal gratification which he derived from it.

“But still my dumb boy was only an amiable Deist, in his comprehension of the divine nature; and I was well aware he might thus live and die, and perish everlastingly, for lack of saving knowledge. He had, hitherto, no conviction of his own sinfulness; to the need, the offices, and the name of a Saviour, he was a stranger; and before he had acquired sufficient skill in language to express or to comprehend the shortest sentence, I was alarmed by seeing in him symptoms of severe illness, at a time when typhus fever was raging around us.

“I now saw that not a day was to be lost in giving him the gospel—the message of reconciliation through the atoning blood of our crucified Redeemer. In stating the manner in which I did this, I am actuated less by the expectation of its being found generally practicable, than by an anxious desire to give glory to God for so extraordinary an instance of his divine power, and to show what encouragements await the weakest, who may betake themselves to such a task, carrying along with them, through every stage of their progress, an abiding conviction that they are but instruments in a far mightier hand—that the work is not theirs, but God’s.

“The way to this memorable conversion was opened, while I was secretly praying that the Lord would point it out, by John expressing some curiosity as to what became of people whom he had

seen carried to their burial. He signified that their eyes were shut very close ; and wished to know if they would ever open them again. Upon this I threw down my needle-work, and bespeaking by a sign his most serious attention, I sketched upon a paper a crowd of persons of all ages, and near them a large pit, with flames issuing from it. I told him that the crowd contained him, myself, and every body ; that all were bad ; that God was angry, and that all must be cast into that fiery gulf. He exhibited great dismay, and anxiously looked for further explanation. I then drew a single figure, who came, I told him, from heaven, being God's Son ; that he besought his Father not to throw those people that should embrace him, into the fire ; that to secure this, he consented to be nailed to a cross ; and that when his head dropped in death, the pit was shut up, and his believing people were saved. It may well be supposed that I greatly doubted the possibility that such a representation, explained only by signs, should convey any clear idea to the boy's mind ; but it is God's will by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe ; and I had immediate proof of His assisting power ; for John, after a pause of wonder, started an objection most delightful to me, inasmuch as it proved that he had laid hold on the true idea of substitution. He observed that the sufferer on the cross was but one ; that the ransomed crowd were many, very many ; and he signified he was in doubt whether God would be satisfied with the exchange. The Lord still helped me. I took off my ring, laying it by itself on the table, and then breaking the leaves and stalks

of some decayed flowers into many pieces, I heaped them near it, asking with a smile which he would have; the one piece of gold, or the many withered fragments? Never shall I forget his look, the beautiful, the brilliant look of sudden apprehension, the laugh of delight, the repeated clapping of his hands; while he declared, by animated signs, that the single piece of gold was better than a room full of old flowers; that the former was like him on the cross; the latter like men, women, and children; and he spelled most exultingly, ‘ONE! ONE!’ Then, with his countenance softening into the loveliest expression of grateful reverence, he looked up, saying, ‘GOOD, GOOD, ONE;’ and ran for the letters to spell his name. That adorable name, which is above every name, that name at which every knee shall bow, I taught him to spell; and then told him how JESUS was laid in the grave; how on the third morning he burst its bars; how he rose to the Father; and that he would raise us from the dead in like manner; I also assured him that Jesus Christ could see and hear us always; that we might talk with him constantly, and be with him hereafter in heaven. I should have remarked, that when showing John the pit of flames, I paused to convince him that he for one had made God angry, which he freely confessed by means of sorrowful looks and gestures, and not the slightest objection did he make to the justice of the dreadful sentence. This struck me the more, because he was exceedingly jealous of his own rights and reputation, never resting for a moment under any supposed invasion of either; yet he had nothing to reply against God; he tacitly ac-

knowledge of his guiltiness; and it was a glorious proof of the efficacy of divine teaching, that he never once appeared to question the love of God in delivering up his Son to a cruel death. I saw with unutterable joy that my poor boy received Jesus Christ as his Saviour; and never, from that happy hour to the moment of his death, did he seem to doubt his interest in the Atonement.

LECTURE X.

ON THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.” “That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father.”—John i. 1, 14, and v. 23.

IF we would form correct views of the character of Christ, we must be guided by the unerring word of God. For as the world by wisdom knew not God, and as by searching we cannot find out the Almighty to perfection, so it is impossible to decide in this important controversy, (respecting the character of Christ,) without having recourse to this infallible guide. If we appeal to human opinions respecting Christ, we shall find them to be as erroneous as they are discordant. Some men have denied his existence; others have deemed him an imposter; others have been struck with admiration of his character as a man; others have considered him a super-human being, and others super-angelic, but no farther.

“The real appeal of every mind, duly sensible of its own weakness, must, after all, be to what it finds expressly written in the word of God; and we have no hesitation in asserting, that we do find the doctrine now alluded to stated in this sacred record, with a decision and clearness of expression, which, if we admit the authenticity of the various passages in which it occurs, is at once decisive of the fact in question.”—(*Shuttleworth.*)

The words of our text are an epitome of the whole testimony of divine revelation on this subject. The *personality* of Jesus Christ, as distinct from the Father, is set forth in these words: “He was *with* God.” His *equality* with the Father is expressed in these words: “He *was* God.” His eternity is clearly intimated in these words: “In the *beginning* was the Word;” for whatever may be the meaning of the phrase, “in the beginning,” even if we carry it back to the beginning of time, or to millions of ages before the creation of men or angels, still the position is true. He existed then, for he was in the beginning, and consequently was before all worlds, even from all eternity.

“The Evangelist does not say that his existence commenced at the beginning, but that *in* the beginning he *was*. The imperfect tense of the verb ‘to be,’ which is here used, evidently denotes his existence antecedently to the beginning; and in a comprehensive expression like this before us, we cannot conceive how the antecedent existence of Deity could be more fully expressed, if the writer had directed our views to the eternity of God.

“It is of little consequence where we fix the pe-

riod of the beginning. If we fix it at the creation of man, this *Word* then *was* : if we fix it at the commencement of time, this *Word* then *was* : and if we carry back our views to the commencement of angelic existence, the same conclusion will follow ; for in either case, ‘in the beginning was the word.’ Now that which was in existence at the beginning, and that which existed antecedently to the beginning, must have been without a beginning ; and that which was without a beginning must be eternal ; and a being who is eternal must be God.

“The same Apostle adds, ‘*the word was with God.*’ These words, when taken in their connexion with what precedes and follows, can have no meaning, unless we admit that he was *one* with him in essence ; for without this we must admit two distinct essences ; and two distinct essences will constitute a plurality of necessarily existent beings, which is absolutely impossible. To admit a plurality, is to admit that all beside one are unnecessary, because one must contain every possible perfection. Now that being whose existence is unnecessary, cannot exist necessarily, and that which does not exist necessarily, cannot thus be with God. If, therefore, the Word was with God, the Word must have been with him in essence, in eternity, in council, in nature ; and the person who has co-existed with Deity and eternity, in any way whatever, must be God.

“It may perhaps be objected, that ‘To be with God, will not infer a sameness of nature, because angels exist with God without being divine.’ That angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, are with God in a subordinate sense, is not to be doubted. But this will not reach the comprehen-

sive import of the expression before us. We must not forget that this Word who was with God, was in existence antecedently to the beginning. It therefore follows, that he was with God before any commencement of created existence; and consequently he was with God in eternity. Now no person can be with God in eternity, or before all commencement of existence, without partaking of the divine essence, and he who is *one* with God in essence, must be God.

“This is a conclusion which perfectly coincides with the next expression, for the same Apostle further informs us, not only that the Word was in the beginning, and was with God, but that the Word actually ‘*was God.*’ No words can be more expressive than those before us. No comment can render them more evident. For he who ‘*was God,*’ must have some attribute of God, and he who has one attribute, must have every attribute; because the divine attributes are incapable of a separation. He also who ‘*was God,*’ still is God, and must continue God forever; because the divine nature is incapable of a transfer, or of a termination.”—(*Rev. S. Drew.*)

The *proper divinity* of Christ is a point so easily proved by the scriptures, that it is only necessary to quote a few passages out of many, to set the matter in the clearest light. In the following he is called God; not *a god*, as Moses was *a god* to Pharaoh, and as magistrates are called *gods*; but in the same sense that the Father Almighty is called God. “Of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever.” “He

that built all things is God." "Unto the Son he saith, thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." In St. Paul's 1st epistle to Timothy, and in his epistle to Titus, he is called, "God our Saviour." In the 1st epistle to Timothy, he is called "the living God," and "God manifested in the flesh." In Titus he is called "the great God." In Isaiah, "the mighty God." In Timothy, "the only wise God," and in Matthew, "Emmanuel," or "God with us."

It is needless here to state that the *names*, *attributes*, and *works*, of God, belong to Christ in the same sense as they do to the Father Almighty, but this may be said without fear of contradiction, that the same lofty claims for the divinity of Christ are made by the writers of the New Testament as for the divinity of the Father by the writers of the Old. The author of the 78th Psalm informs us that the Israelites in the desert tempted God by asking meat for their lust, and St. Paul tells us, when speaking of the same circumstance, that they tempted CHRIST—hence it follows, if they tempted Christ, that Christ is God. In the same Psalm the writer says of the Israelites, "God was their Rock," and in the same epistle Paul says, "that Rock was Christ." There is, perhaps, no better way of proving the divinity of Christ, than by comparing certain passages in the Old Testament with their parallel passages in the New, in which it will be found impossible to reconcile the one with the other, on any other ground than by admitting the doctrine in question: as for example. in Deut. x. 17. Moses says, "The Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords:" In Psalm xcv. 3, David says,

“He is a great God, and a great King above all gods.” This is said of God the Father.—What follows is said of Christ: “He is Lord of lords and King of kings. Rev. xvii. 14. In Isaiah, xiv. 6, Jehovah says, “I am the first and the last,” and in Rev. i. 17, Christ makes use of the very same words in reference to himself; and in the 8th verse of the same chapter he [says, “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.” Hence it follows, he is God. The prophet Isaiah, in the 40th chapter says, “The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.” Now let us compare this passage with two in the Evangelists, and see to whom they apply it. “This is he,” says St. Matthew, “spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord.” Here St. Matthew applies the words of the prophet to John the Baptist, who was to prepare the way of the LORD, and to make straight in the desert a highway for the God of Israel. St. Luke does the same. Speaking of the Baptist, he says, “Many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.” Here it is evident that the LORD GOD of the prophet, is no other than Christ; for immediately after the words, “the Lord their God,” St. Luke adds, “And he shall go before HIM, to make ready a people prepared for the LORD.”

The Prophets Isaiah and Hosea repeatedly and most unequivocally state that Jehovah is God, and beside him there is no Saviour. (See Isa. xliii. 11,

and xlv. 15—22 : and Hosea xiii. 4.) and St. Peter most explicitly asserts, (Acts iv. 12,) that there is salvation in no other than in Jesus Christ, from which it follows, most conclusively, that if Christ be the only Saviour of sinful men, and there be no other Saviour than the God of the prophets, that Christ is God. The Lord Jehovah, by the prophet Zechariah, says, “I will pour upon the house of David the spirit of grace and supplication, and they shall look upon ME whom they have pierced,” and St. John quoting this very passage, applies it to Christ, which proves that the Lord Jehovah, spoken of by the prophet, and the Saviour spoken of by the Evangelist, are ONE.

Is the Father called God ? so is the Son ; John xx. 28. Is the Father Alpha and Omega ? so is the Son ; Rev. i. 8. Is the Father called Jehovah ? so is the Son ; Jer. xxiii. 6 ; Hos. i. 7. Is the Father Eternal ? so is the Son ; Isa. ix. 6 ; Micah v. 2 ; Matt. ii. 6. Is the Father Almighty ? so is the Son ; Heb. i. 3, 8 ; Rev. i. 8. Is the Father Omnipresent ? so is the Son ; Matt. xviii. 20. Is the Father Omniscient ? so is the Son ; John ii. 24 ; xxi. 17. Is the Father Omnipotent ? so is the Son ; John i. 3 ; Col. i. 16. Doth the Father preserve all things ? so doth the Son ; Heb. i. 3 ; Col. i. 17. Doth the Father forgive sins ? so doth the Son ; Matt. ix. 6 ; Luke v. 20. Is the Father a Spirit, and to be worshipped in spirit and in truth ? so is the Son ; 1 Cor. xv. 45 ; 2 Cor. iii. 17 ; Heb. i. 6. Is the Father to be honored ? so is the Son ; John v. 23.” (*Bp. Beveridge.*)

When we consider the *names* given to Christ, the *attributes* possessed by him, and the *actions* performed by him, and the *worship* paid to him on earth

and in heaven, how is it possible to avoid the conclusion that he is God? But if any thing can strengthen the arguments already adduced, it is the *absurdity* of the contrary supposition. Suppose we say that he is a *created being*, then it follows that he must have had a Creator, and a beginning, for creation implies an act, and an agent, and time in which that act was performed, as also, time before that act was performed. If, then, Christ be a created being, he was created in time, and cannot be eternal. But this is contrary to the plain testimony of scripture, and therefore the supposition is not admissible. The plain letter of scripture must, therefore, be our guide. Admit that he is a created being, then it follows that he created himself, "*for by him all things* were created, that are in heaven, and in earth, visible and invisible." Col. i. 16. There is no absurdity, however, in supposing that his human nature was created, and created by himself. But his divine nature is without beginning, and it is always in reference to this that we say, He is God. Admit that he is a created being, then it follows that he is a *dependent* being. But if he be a dependent being, how can he "uphold all things;" how can he be "before all things;" how can he be "over all, God blessed for ever." As to his human nature, he may be dependent, or, more properly, his human nature may be dependent on the Divine nature, and in this sense, he may be said to do not his own will, but the will of him that sent him. As man, he might with propriety pray to the Father, and say "My

Father is greater than I.”* As man, suffering, and dying, he might say, with great propriety, “not my will but thine be done,” and, “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.” But, as to his divine nature, we shall always find that he claimed equality with the Father, in eternity, power and glory.

If nothing more than man, or that which was visible and tangible, how can he be the “image of the invisible God”—“the express image of his person,” “whom no man hath seen nor can see?” Col. i. 15; Heb. i. 3; 1 Tim. vi. 16. If inferior to the Father, how can the fulness of the Godhead reside in him? How can he possess all power, both in heaven and earth, if he be not equal with the Father? If nothing more than a created being, how can he be a fit object of worship, of trust, and of confidence in the dying hour? If a created being, for aught we know, he may be peccable, and mutable, and liable to death, how then can he be “the same yesterday, to-day and for ever?”

If Christ be nothing more than man, then all those Gentiles that trust in him, are accursed of God, for it is said by the prophet Jeremiah, ch. xvii. 5, “Cursed be the man that trusteth in man,” and Isaiah, Matthew and Paul, all testify that “in his name shall the Gentiles trust.” Isa. xi. 10; Matt. xii. 21; Rom. xv. 12. Now, as the prophet Jeremiah has shown that whoever trusteth in man is accursed, it follows that all who trust in Christ for salvation, will not only be disappointed of their hopes, but punished for their folly, for trusting in him, if he be

* It is never said in scripture of the Holy Ghost, that the Father is greater than he!

not God ; but how does this agree with his own declaration, “ He that believeth shall be saved ?”

The New Testament writers assure us that those who believe in Christ, (*trust in him for salvation,*) “ are justified from all things, from which they could not be by the law of Moses.” And the Old Testament writers tell us, that, “ in the Lord all the seed of Israel shall be justified.” David and the prophets tell us that the Lord God blotteth out sin, and forgiveth iniquity ; and the New Testament writers tell us that this is the work of Christ. Col. iii. 13. The language of the Old Testament is, “ Let Israel hope in the Lord ; for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him there is plenteous redemption : and he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities,” Psalm cxxx. 7, 8. And St. Paul, with equal fervor and piety, says, “ Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the Great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity.” Titus ii. 14. Now, as there is no need of two Redeemers, it follows, either that St. Paul is guilty of a most grievous absurdity, by encouraging believers to hope in Christ, or, else, he who gave himself to redeem us from all iniquity, is **THE GREAT, THE EVERLASTING GOD !** In fact, if Christ be not God, the Jews are in a much more enviable and hopeful condition than Christians, for *their* God is fully able to save *them*, while Christians, by trusting in Christ, (*if he be not God,*) are the subjects of a most awful delusion—for “ cursed be the man that putteth his trust in *man*.”

By comparing Isaiah vi. 8, with John xii. 38—41,

we learn that Jesus Christ is one of those Divine persons who said, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" So, also, by collating what St. Paul says in the first chapter of Hebrews, with what David says in the forty-fifth Psalm, we learn that Christ is God; "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." The same may be observed between a passage in the 102d Psalm, and a paragraph in the 1st of Hebrews. The Psalmist, addressing himself to God, says, "Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure : yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment ; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed : But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end." The Apostle applies all this to Christ. The same may be remarked between a passage in Micah v. 2, and Matt. ii. 6. The words of the prophet are,— "But thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be the ruler in Israel : whose goings forth have been from old, from everlasting."

"This prophecy," says Mr. Watson, "is, perhaps, the most important single prophecy in all the Old Testament, and the most comprehensive respecting the personal character of the Messiah, and his successive manifestations to the world. It crowns the whole chain of predictions respecting the several limitations of the promised seed to the line of Shem, to the family of Abraham, to the tribe of Judah, to the royal house of David ; terminating

in his birth at Bethlehem, ‘the city of David.’ It carefully distinguishes his human nativity from his divine nature and eternal existence, and forms the basis of the New Testament revelation, and of the respective histories of Christ in the Gospel.”

The PRE-EXISTENCE of Jesus Christ, as the WORD, is clearly intimated in the following passages, as well as in our text, “And they heard the VOICE of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day.” Gen. iii. 8. “After these things, the WORD of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.” Gen. xv. 1. “And the angel of the Lord said unto Hagar, Behold thou art with child, and shall bear a son, and shall call his name Ishmael, (*that is, “God who hears,”*) because the Lord hath heard thy affliction. And he will be a wild man, and his hand will be against every man, and every man’s hand against him : and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.” Gen. xvi. 11. “These things,” says Dr. Clarke, “cannot be spoken of any *human* or *created* being, for the knowledge, works, &c. attributed to this person, are such as belong to God ; and, as in all these cases, there is a most evident *personal appearance*, Jesus Christ alone can be meant, for of God the Father, it has ever been true, that *no man hath seen his shape at any time.*”

There is also a very remarkable passage in the life of the patriarch Jacob, recorded Gen. xxxii. 28, similar to the above, which, when taken in connexion with a passage in the prophet Hosea, proves that those personal appearances, under the Patri-

archal dispensation, were no other than the Lord Jesus. With the Mosaic account we are all familiar,—the words of the prophet are as follows :—
 “By his strength he had power with God : yea, he had power over the ANGEL, and prevailed : he wept and made supplication unto him ; he found him in Bethel, and there he spake with us ; even the LORD GOD OF HOSTS ; the Lord is his memorial.”

Here, it is evident that the angel with whom Jacob wrestled, was no other than the Lord God of Hosts. But we need not multiply passages—the text is sufficient of itself. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word, (*as to his person,*) was WITH God, and the Word, (*as to his nature,*) WAS God.” It was this eternal Word, who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, whose love and condescension were so great that he made himself of no reputation, but took upon him, (*upon whom, I would ask, if he had no existence before he was born of the virgin,*) “the form of a servant.” This eternal Word “was RICH,” (*in all the essential attributes of the Deity,*) “and for our sakes became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be rich.” As *man* Christ was *not rich*, for he had not where to lay his head ; but as *God* he *was rich*, and as *man* he was *poor*. This is the mystery of godliness—“God was manifest in the flesh.” The Word became incarnate—“The Word was made flesh !”

Once more,—if he be not God, where is there any merit in what he has done and suffered ? We would not say that any one of his servants has suffered more than our blessed Redeemer, even though he should have lived to the age of Methuselah, for

it is impossible for us to say what he suffered in his agony in the garden. A learned and good man has said, that "one drop of *his sad cup* would annihilate the universe." Of this, however, we can only hazard a pious conjecture. But this we know, the Redeemer himself has said, in reference to his own works, "*greater works* than these shall he that believeth on me do, because I go unto the Father." But though the Apostles might excel the Master in the *greatness* of the works which he enabled them to perform, yet none of them ventured to predict his own death as Christ did; or had power to raise himself from the dead. "I have power," says Christ, "to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again." He also had power on earth to forgive sins, in a higher sense than that to which any of his apostles pretended or aspired.

The "glory," that invests his sacred character, is not the glory of the "moon," nor of the "stars," but of the "sun," shining in his strength; not with borrowed rays, but with a splendor all his own; a "glory which he had with the Father before the world began." It was, as the apostle expresses it, "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father;" and, as the author of the epistle to the Hebrews expresses it, "the brightness of his glory," "with whom there is no variableness nor shadow of turning."

The PERFECT EQUALITY of Christ, or the *Logos*, as he is called, with the Father, must be admitted, if we take the scriptures for our guide, and understand them in their plain, obvious, and literal sense; which is unquestionably their proper sense; for

when we consider that they were given to an unlettered people, and are designed for the use of the common people, who have neither time nor talents to resort to abstruse investigation or metaphysical reasoning on the subject, we must, unless we charge the Father of mercies with duplicity, suppose that he designed that that gospel which was for the comfort of the poor especially, should be written in a style which they could not only easily understand, but could not easily misunderstand. If, therefore, the scriptures were intended to teach the doctrine for which we contend, it is difficult to imagine how the language could be more appropriate. But if the contrary doctrine had been intended, it is very easy to imagine how a language could have been selected much more to the purpose, than that which is actually employed in the Scriptures.

It certainly argues very much against the soundness of a creed, or a system, when it is obliged to have recourse to means, which the illiterate cannot comprehend, for its support, and is obliged to twist and torture the Scriptures, and wrest them from their plain, literal sense, in order to maintain it. Suppose, for example, it were the intention of the inspired writers to induce us to believe that Christ, as to his divine nature, was *co-eternal* with the Father, what language more appropriate could be used than that which is employed in the Scriptures:—"Before Abraham was I am."—"I am the first and the last,"—"Jesus Christ, the same, yesterday, and to-day, and forever." Suppose it were intended that we should believe that Christ is *co-equal* with the Father, what language could be more to the point

than this—"I and my Father are one."—"All things that the Father hath are mine."—"And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."—"Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be **EQUAL WITH GOD**."—"For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead."—"That all men should honor the Son **EVEN** as they honor the Father."—"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, the first and the last, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." Rev. i. 8; xxii. 13.

The following judicious and weighty observations, taken from Buck's Theological Dictionary, are worthy of profound regard.

"The eternal Godhead of Christ seems evident, if we consider—1. The *language* of the New Testament, and compare it with the state of the Pagan world at the time of its first publication. The whole world, except Judea, **WORSHIPPED IDOLS** at the time of Christ's appearance. Jesus Christ, the Evangelists, and the Apostles, proposed to destroy idolatry, and to establish the worship of one only true and living God. The least expression used by them, that would go to deify a creature, or countenance idolatry, would have been a source of the greatest error. How then shall we account for such expressions as these, which were used in reference to Christ. "The word was God"—"God was manifest in the flesh."—"God with us."—"Lord of glory."—"Lord of all."—"Who is over all, God, blessed for evermore." John i. 1; 1 Tim. iii. 16; Matt. i. 3; 1 Cor. ii. 8; Acts x. 36; Rom. ix. 5. The indiscriminate, incautious, and unqualified use of such

language as this in reference to a second person, a creature, would have been the direct way to ruin the cause of Christianity. It would have been the direct way to establish idolatry at once.

“ 2. Compare the *style* of the New Testament with the state of the Jews at the time of its first publication. In the time of Christ, the Jews were zealous defenders of the **UNITY** of God, and of that idea of his perfections which their scriptures excited. Jesus and his Apostles expressed the highest regard for the Jewish scriptures ; yet the writers of the New Testament describe Him by the very titles by which the writers of the Old Testament had described the Supreme God. Compare Psalm xxiv. 10, with 1 Cor. ii. 8 ; Hos. i. 7, with Luke ii. 11 ; Dan. v. 23, with 1 Cor. xv. 47 ; 1 Chron. xxix. 11, with Col. ii. 10. In this we see they took a method of recommending Jesus to the Jews most likely to alarm and enrage them. Whatever they meant, it is evident the Jews understood them in the sense that we understand them, and consequently took Jesus for a blasphemer, ‘because, said they, thou being a man makest thyself God.’ John x. 33.

“ Had Christ and his Apostles meant to establish *polytheism* in opposition to the *unity* of God, their language was well adapted to secure the object, on the supposition that Christ is not one with the Father. But the Jews were not polytheists, therefore they would not admit his claims to divine worship, and not being disposed to receive him as their Messiah, they took offence at his words, and stumbled at that stumbling stone. But did the Apostles apologize for the language they used ? By no means ;

but told the Jews plainly, after Christ's resurrection, that it was through ignorance of his real character that they crucified him. If the Apostles meant to teach polytheism, and the Jews so understood them, their laws would have justified them in putting Christ to death, but it is evident they meant no such thing, neither did the Jews so understand them."

"3. Compare the *perfections* which are ascribed to Jesus Christ in the scriptures with those which are ascribed to God—a very dangerous proposition if he were not God.'—(*See Lecture on the Trinity.*)

"4. Consider the *works* ascribed to Jesus Christ, and compare them with the works and claims of Jehovah."—(*See Lec. Trin.*)

"5. Consider that *Divine worship* which the scriptures claim for Jesus Christ. It is a command of God, 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him *only* shalt thou serve;' Matt. iv. 10: but all the angels of God are commanded to worship Christ; Heb. i. 6. Baptism is an act of worship performed in his name; Matt. xxviii. 19. Swearing is an act of worship—a solemn appeal to the heart searching God; this appeal is made to Christ; Rom. ix. 1. 'I say the truth in Christ; I lie not.' The committing of the soul to God is a sacred act of worship; in the performance of this act Stephen died, saying, 'Lord Jesus receive my spirit.' Acts vii. 59. 'The whole host of heaven worship him that sitteth upon the throne and the Lamb for ever. Rev. v. 13, 14.

"6. If Christ be *only* a messenger or servant of Jehovah, what has John the Baptist to do with the

words of Isaiah, xl. 3, as quoted by Matthew iii. 3? See also Mal. iii. 1, and notice the words, ‘The **LORD** whom ye seek shall suddenly come to *his* temple.’

“7. Examine whether *events* have justified that notion of Christianity which the prophets gave their countrymen of it, if Jesus Christ be not God. The calling of the Gentiles from the worship of idols to the worship of the true God, is one purpose which the prophets signified the coming of Christ should effect. See Isaiah xi. 1—5; Zeph. ii. 11; Zech. xiv. 9. ‘And the idols he shall utterly abolish.’ Isa. ii. 18. If Christ be God, the event answered the prediction; if not, the event has not yet come to pass; for true Christians worship Jesus, which is idolatry if he be not God.

“8. Consider what a multitude of passages have no sense, or a very absurd one, if Christ be not God.” Compare Jer. x. 10, with 1 Tim. i. 17; Exod. iii. 14, with John viii. 58; Neh. ix. 30, with 1 Peter i. 11; Rev. xxii. 6, with Rev. xxii. 16; John iv. 42, with 1 Tim. iv. 10; Ps. l. 6, with John v. 22; Heb. xii. 23, with 2 Cor. v. 10; Isa. xlv. 24, with 1 Cor. i. 3; Isa. xlv. 25, with Acts xiii. 39; Isa. xliii. 25, with Col. iii. 13; Exod. xx. 24, with Matt. xviii. 20. See also all the passages referred to in Dr. A. Clarke’s Index to his commentary, at the end of the Old Testament, article “Divinity of Christ,” and his notes on those passages.

The Divinity of our Lord was more than once proclaimed by his enemies. In several places demons acknowledged his authority and power. (Mark i. 24; Luke iv. 34.) But the most remarkable tes-

timony in favor of his divinity, is that given by Pilate, in the title which he wrote and caused to be fixed on his cross. "It was usual among the ancient Romans to proclaim by a herald, or to write in legible characters, the crimes for which persons were condemned and put to death, that all who heard the proclamation, or saw and read the superscription, might judge of the justice and equity of the sentence: but such an accusation as this was never heard of, either before or since; and no wonder, for there never was, nor can be, a similar occasion. Here is a title, containing the accusation preferred against the Lord Jesus Christ, yet it charges him with no crime! Surely, nothing can be more interesting, nothing more beneficial to the believer, than to contemplate this innocent sufferer.

"1. His name, **JESUS**, signifies he who looses, enlarges, and endows with salvation. He enriches man's poverty, strengthens his weakness, instructs his ignorance, brings him out of straits and difficulties, and raises him to happiness, beatitude, and glory. And the aggregate of these is **SALVATION**. Hence his name is called Jesus, because *he saves* his people from their sins.

"2. He was called a *Nazarene*, not always by way of reproach, but on account of his personal sanctity; and God, by imposing that name upon him, pointed him out as the real *Nazarite*, the great antitype of that emblematic character.

"3. The third part of the title, *The King of the Jews*, was designed of God to point out Christ's undisputed claim to the throne of David, by natural

descent; but this claim and character he declined assuming, and taught his people to believe that his kingdom is not of this world. Here, then, we are to conceive of the title, spiritually. Jesus Christ is the true king of the real Jews; for 'he is not a Jew that is one outwardly,' and consequently the kingdom of Christ is a spiritual kingdom. Perhaps we may consider the day of his ascension into heaven as his coronation day, when he peculiarly took possession of his mediatorial throne. He is called by the prophets Ezekiel and Hosea 'King David;' and however unlike a king he was, while he tarbernaled with man on the earth, yet now he is 'the blessed and only potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords.'

"Though there can be no doubt but Pilate was a bad man, yet there seems to be something very remarkable in his being led to affix such an accusation as that above. The custom of writing the accusation was usual, but with respect to the matter under consideration, it was wholly unprecedented; for though there might be many instances of people unjustly put to death in the Roman history, yet none suffered publicly who had not some crime imputed to them, *our blessed Lord excepted!* In his case, Pilate seems, in a great measure, to have been forced to yield to the power of truth—to have been thoroughly convinced of his spotless innocence, and at the same time, of the barbarous malignity of the Jewish priests and rulers. There can be little doubt but that it was his intention to screen the innocent victim from their rancorous hate, which he would have done, had not the eternal purposes of

God prevented, and the Jews had not told him, that if he let Jesus go he was not Cæsar's friend.

But notwithstanding the odious character of the Roman governor, when we consider the degraded state of the Jewish nation at that time, together with their extreme pride and hatred of all other people, whom they esteemed no better than dogs, it is certain that he would look upon them as a nation of contemptible beings, and that he would rejoice in an opportunity to mortify their pride and arrogance, especially when it would offer him a double advantage of mortifying their ambition, and of manifesting his loyalty to Cæsar, by declaring Jesus to be their king. What, indeed, could be more mortifying to them, than for Pilate to write such a title of accusation as should exculpate him from disloyalty, and at the same time degrade them, implying that an obscure person, a native of the despicable city of Nazareth, who had to suffer the death of a slave, a malefactor, was their king!

“It is more than probable that Pilate, in writing the title of our Lord's accusation as he did, intended to throw the odium of his death upon the Jews; for in the accusation, as it is called, there is no mention made of any crime—no sedition, blasphemy, or imposture. It was undoubtedly a great mortification to them that the person whom they had so vehemently accused should be proclaimed innocent, and every one left to conclude that his condemnation was rather to please them than to execute justice.

“From the whole we may conclude, that as in this title of accusation there was no crime specified,

and from the circumstance of its being written in three different languages, that God intended to instruct us in the following particulars :

“1. That the enemies of our Lord were led to proclaim the innocence of the sufferer! The probable reasons which induced Pilate to write such a title have been already mentioned; and it only need be added, that when the wicked say, ‘Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us, He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh at them—the Lord shall have them in derision.’ (Ps. ii. 3, 4.) And while they are pluming themselves with imagining that they act as if they had no superior, they are fulfilling the divine purpose of Him who maketh the wrath of man to turn to his praise.

“2. To proclaim his offices and character. When a voice from the excellent glory proclaimed, ‘This is my beloved Son, hear ye him,’ only a few were witnesses. But here he is proclaimed publicly, to all that pass by, and in three different languages, two of which were almost universal in that age, that all might understand. This title tended to strengthen the faith of the apostles, and of the infant church. When none of them durst proclaim their Master’s offices and character, Eternal Wisdom makes his enemies do it, and turns even the monster Pilate into a preacher of righteousness. The mourning children of the bride-chamber, in this absence of the bridegroom, were exceedingly weak in faith. They might be saying one to another, ‘Is it possible that he could be an imposter? Was all that we heard and saw a delusion? Were our senses deceived?’ What says the title?—was

there any imposture detected? No! The very judge proclaims him innocent! Surely, then, he dies a sacrifice for sin, and not as a criminal or a martyr!

“3. The title appears to have been intended of God, as a powerful means for paving the way to the future conquests of Christ over both Jews and Gentiles—to overcome the prejudices of the Jews, and to triumph over the idolatry of the Gentiles. That this was the divine intention, will appear when we consider the fitness of the means to accomplish the end, and compare these with the effects which followed.

“Consider the *languages* in which the Redeemer’s name was published in the title. In *Hebrew*—the language in which all the predictions concerning Christ were written. In *Greek*—the polite language of the earth at that time—the language of philosophers—the language into which the scriptures had been translated between two and three hundred years before this event. In *Latin*—the language of the empire—the language of the very soldiers who nailed him to the cross and watched his grave. Had the title been written in only one of these languages, perhaps not a third part of those who saw it would have been able to read it.

“Consider also the *place* where this testimony was given: at *Jerusalem*, the capital of Judea, the most populous place in the land. Had it been in a remote or obscure part of the land, the most of those who saw and read this title would have known little or nothing about it; but God intended that all

this should be done in the presence of many witnesses.

“Consider also the *time* when this was done : at the *Passover*, one of their great yearly festivals, and that which was chiefly esteemed, when all the males were obliged to go up to Jerusalem, from every corner of the land. And, moreover, the ancient prophecies were now about to be fulfilled. Daniel’s ‘seventy weeks,’ when ‘Messiah should be cut off,’ were expired. The ‘sceptre’ had ‘departed from Judah,’ and consequently the expectations of the advent of the Messiah were raised to the highest pitch, and the Jews would resort to this feast from all nations.

“Consider also the *prodigies* that attended the crucifixion of our Lord. 1. The total darkness. The learned need not be told that this was preternatural. The passover was kept on the fifteenth day of the moon, consequently the sun could not be eclipsed. And, beside, a total eclipse of the sun does not last ‘three hours,’ rarely more than three minutes. Such an event could not have happened, and all that were then in Jerusalem be ignorant of it; and for the Evangelists to have recorded such an event, if no such fact occurred, would have exposed them to the most perfect contempt, not of the learned only, but of every one. Here we see universal nature, as it were, in mourning, and the eye of the world closed, lest it should behold the indignity offered to its Creator. He who at the beginning said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light! now said, ‘Let darkness be,’ and it was dark! But never did the sun shine with such brightness

since the world began, as in that auspicious hour when ‘the darkness ended!’ In that dread, blessed moment, when the Redeemer bowed his head and gave up the ghost, the news, swifter than the sun’s rays, would fly through all the celestial abodes, that the ransom was accepted, the full price of man’s atonement paid; and God, looking down well pleased, would smile on all his works again.

2. The vail of the temple was rent in twain, and they who came to worship in the temple would see the portentous rent, and laying together the other prodigies that accompanied the crucifixion, might be led to consider the wonderful title, and acknowledge Jesus, the Nazarene, to be indeed the King of the Jews. 3. A third concomitant was the earthquake, the most terrific and alarming of all, and one that would make the stoutest hearts to tremble. 4. By the earthquake the rocks were rent, and the graves were opened. Then was that scripture fulfilled, ‘Thy dead men shall live, together with *my* dead body shall they come. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust, for the earth shall cast out her dead.’ Isa. xxvi. 19.”—(*Rev. David McAllum.*)

It will be recollected that our Redeemer predicted his own death and resurrection; and in his lifetime declared that his gospel should be preached in all nations. “This gospel of the kingdom,” (says he, Matt. xxiv. 14,) “shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come.” But how was this to be accomplished in so short a time as before the destruction of Jerusalem, as these words seem to intimate! Let it be remembered, then, that he who commanded

his first apostles to preach the gospel to every creature, knew also their natural unfitness for the work, and therefore required them for a while to tarry in Jerusalem, and wait for the promise of the Father, until they should be endued with power from on high, "and then," said he, "ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." (Acts i. 8.) He promised also that they should speak with new tongues. (Mark xvi. 17.) Now let us notice how these things were fulfilled, and how they all concurred to prove the Messiah to be a true prophet, and to bring about the great event which he had predicted.

The Jews, as we have before seen, resorted to the feast of the passover at Jerusalem from all nations, and it is highly probable that many of the wealthier sort, who came from distant countries, would stay in or near Jerusalem for fifty days, to attend the feast of pentecost. This is very natural to suppose. Now the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, all happened within this time. The feast of pentecost was exactly ten days after our Lord's ascension. Had the crucifixion and effusion of the Holy Spirit happened at any other time, not one in a hundred, perhaps not one in a thousand, would have been present to witness their effects. But so did the wisdom of God order it, that at the very time that one of Christ's predictions received its accomplishment, the way should be opened for the fulfillment of another, and in the

fulfillment of a second, the foundation should be laid for the accomplishment of a third.

The gospel was to be preached in all the (*then known*) world before the destruction of Jerusalem—the apostles, the humble fishermen of Galilee, were to be the chosen instruments of preaching it. To fit them for this work, they were to be endued with power from on high. (Luke xxiv. 49.) To enable them to preach in all languages, they were to be able to speak with new tongues; and to prepare the way for all this, God so ordered it that the astonishing events above described should take place at Jerusalem, at the very time when “devout men from every nation under heaven” should be assembled there. (Acts ii. 5.) To excite expectation, the most wonderful prophecies of the Old Testament were soon to be fulfilled, and to awaken attention, Pilate, the Roman governor, affixes a title to the cross, which in fact contained no proper accusation; and when the Jews desired him so to alter it as to make it answer the end according to their view, he replied, “What I have written, I have written,” and would not change it, but left it, as it were, to proclaim, in the three most popular languages of the earth, the innocence, the character, and the dignity of the mighty sufferer.

And who that surveys the wisdom that planned all this, and the providence that brought it about, and the prescience that foresaw every human contingency, and the power that overruled the motives and actions of moral agents, among whom were an ignorant and infatuated populace, a proud and mercenary priesthood, a despicable traitor, an Idumean

prince, a Roman governor, and an armed band, all acting without design or concert, sometimes in opposition to one another, sometimes not knowing what to do with their prisoner, accusing him of one crime, and condemning him for another, and at last affixing a title of accusation which contains no crime at all ! Who, we ask again, can survey all this, in the calm of an unprejudiced mind, and connect with it the mighty results which have followed in exact accordance with the predictions of Christ, and deny that he is the very and eternal God ?

But will this Divine Saviour condescend to be my Saviour ? Yes, he will. He is the light of the world. He is the good shepherd that laid down his life for the sheep. He is the great physician, and his blood can make the wounded whole. He suffered the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. Are we guilty ? He has purchased our pardon. Are we hungry ? He is the bread of life. Are we thirsty ? He will give us of the water of life freely. Are we miserable ? He will make us happy. Are we dead ? He is the resurrection and the life. And whosoever cometh unto Him, he will in no wise cast out. To Him be all honor and glory, world without end, Amen !

LECTURE XI.

THE PERSONALITY, DIVINITY, AND OFFICES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

“ But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.” John xv. 26.

IN the last Lecture we have attempted to show that Jesus Christ is the very and eternal God. In this, we shall attempt to prove that the Holy Spirit is the same, and in the next, as a necessary result of the truth contained in these two Lectures, we shall endeavor to establish the doctrine of the Trinity. But, as in the subsequent Lecture, many passages will be brought forward, to prove that the Spirit, and the Son, are equal with the Father, it will not be necessary to extend the remarks on the proper divinity of the Holy Spirit in this; a few only will suffice, and the rest of the Lecture may then be devoted to a more practical view of the subject, as embraced in the title of this discourse.

In the text under consideration, it is stated that the Holy Spirit “proceedeth from the Father.” But lest we should suppose that the Spirit is only an *emanation* from the Father, in the same manner that Truth and Love may be said to emanate, or flow from Him, let us notice that the personal pronoun **He**, is applied to the Spirit, in the same sense that it is applied to the Father and the Son, which is never the case with respect to Truth and Love. These attributes, or qualities, may be said to emanate from God, as light may be said to emanate from the sun ; but it cannot be said that Truth is God, or that Love is God. When we say that the light and heat of the sun are equal to the sun, being co-existent, and co-essential with the sun itself, we do not mean that light is the sun, or that heat is the sun, but that they are emanations from the sun. The body of the sun is one thing, the light of the sun is another, and the heat is another. Light and heat may exist independently of the sun, but it is difficult to conceive of a sun without light and heat. These remarks are not thrown in for the purpose of proving the doctrine of the Trinity, but rather to show in what sense we use certain terms ; for though the sun may be as fit an emblem as any thing in created nature, to represent the glory and beauty of the uncreated One, yet, it is presumed, that nothing that is felt and seen, can explain to us the mystery of the Divine nature, or furnish a fit object wherewith to compare it. The Holy Scriptures must be our guide in this sublime enquiry, and so far as they are our instructors, so far it is safe for us to go, and no farther. When, therefore, we say that

the Holy Ghost is God, and Christ is God, and that these are equal with the Father, if the Scriptures will sustain us we are safe, but if not we are in error.

The proper Divinity and Personality of the Holy Spirit, may be proved, it is thought, by the following considerations. 1. Though, in the Scriptures, the word rendered “spirit,” sometimes signifies breath, or wind, sometimes the immaterial part of man, and sometimes a celestial being, yet, when the definite article, or the epithet “holy” is added, the third person in the Trinity is meant. 2. When the acts of creation, regeneration, sanctification, and the resurrection of the dead, are spoken of, as the work of the Holy Spirit, his personality and divinity are certainly implied. 3. When the attributes of eternity, omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience, are spoken of, as being the natural attributes of the Spirit; as, also, 4. When the inalienable rights and possessions of the Deity are implied, and no one else is spoken of but the Spirit. 5. When any other essential perfection of the Deity is attributed to the Holy Spirit, such as the power of inspiring a prophet to foretell a future event; or of communicating supernatural gifts; or enabling a person to work miracles. 6. When he is called God, in the same sense that the Father is called God; and, 7. When the same divine honors are paid to Him as are paid to the Father and Son, as in the apostolic benediction, and in the ordinance of baptism. In all these instances, his divinity is clearly set forth. And in the acts of coming, testifying, reproving, receiving, showing, teaching, hearing, speaking, send-

ing, helping, forbidding, not suffering, &c., his personality is as clearly implied.

The following passages on these points should be seriously regarded. "And when He is come, he will reprove the world of sin—he will guide you into all truth—he will show you things to come—he shall receive of mine, and show it to you." John xvi. 8—15. "And as they ministered unto the Lord, the Holy Ghost said, separate to me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them." Acts xiii. 2. "They were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia."—"They assayed to go into Bythinia, but the Spirit suffered them not." Acts xvi. 6, 7. "Take heed to the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers." Acts xx. 28. "Thus saith the Holy Ghost, so shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle." Acts xxi. 11. "The Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith." 1 Tim. iv. 1. Let it be further noted, that it was the Holy Ghost that inspired the prophets, and that taught the apostles to preach and write. It is the Holy Ghost that renews and sanctifies believers, that dwells in their mortal bodies, and will quicken and raise them at the last day.

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is as clearly pointed out in the scriptures, as that of the Father and of Christ. Is it said, "He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God and God in him;" it is also said, "Christ in you the hope of glory;" and it is also said, "by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." Persons are baptized in the name of the Holy Spirit

as well as in the name of Christ and of the Father, and it is the peculiar province of the Spirit to witness the adoption of believers into the family of God. The language of divine inspiration is so constructed, and the whole system of divine revelation so framed, as to favor the idea of a Trinity of persons in the Godhead, that it is matter of wonder how any person can lose sight of it. To be sure, when error, education, prejudice or creed are suffered to intervene between the mind of man and the truth as it is in Jesus, he may not *perceive* the truth. It was so with Peter, while in bondage to the law; but when he saw that the Holy Ghost was given to the believing Gentiles, as well as to the Jews, then he exclaimed, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons."

I once asked a little girl, who had not, to my knowledge at least, ever been at a Sabbath School, this question, "Who is Jesus Christ?" She answered, "God!" This convinced me that an unprejudiced mind, not in the habit of making philosophical speculations, would, on reading the scriptures without note or comment, most naturally fall in with the sentiment that Christ is God, and that the Holy Ghost is God. Let us take for example such passages as these: "Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." Acts v. 3, 4. "To the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ." Col. ii. 2. "And the Lord direct your hearts unto the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ." Is it not most clear from these passages that the Holy Ghost

is God? and is it not equally clear, from the following, that Christ is God? "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ our hope." 1 Tim.

i. 1. Christ himself has clearly demonstrated the personality and divinity of the Holy Ghost, in what he has said respecting the unpardonable sin; "for," as Bishop Beveridge observes, "supposing Him not to be God, but a creature, and the sin, or blasphemy against him to be unpardonable, then the sins against a creature are unpardonable, when sins against God are pardonable; a supposition which, if it be not the sin in question, is little less than blasphemy."

As the further consideration of the proper divinity of the Holy Spirit is now reserved for the Lecture on the Trinity, where it will properly come in, let us notice more particularly *the offices and work of the Holy Spirit*.

1. Under the Christian dispensation, it is the peculiar office and work of the Holy Spirit to explain those visions and special revelations which were peculiar to the patriarchal and prophetic dispensations. In the days of Samuel it was said, "the word of the Lord was precious in those days, there was no open vision." And in a subsequent age it was asserted, that "where there is no vision the people perish;" and in a period still later, a complaint was made, that "the people were destroyed for lack of knowledge." The manner in which the Divine Being used to make known his will in those ages of the world, was somewhat obscure; as by dreams, visions, and symbolical representations,

many instances of which are distinctly noted in the Old Testament. Several of them are exhibited in detail in the books of the prophets, but they are clothed in such obscure language that we can scarcely decipher them. Who can explain the first, the tenth, and the last eight chapters of the book of Ezekiel? But when the Spirit, under whose influence they were written, shall see fit to take away the vail from our heart, and open our eyes, we shall see and understand their important meaning, as was the case with the apostles in respect to many of the deep things of God in their day. Then shall we, like them, be able to say, "God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit."

2. It is the province of the Holy Spirit to supply the place of the personal presence of Jesus Christ, and to finish that teaching which he began upon earth. "It is expedient," said he, "that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come, but if I depart I will send him unto you." Had the world known Christ as it might have known him, and received instead of rejected him, it is probable we should have enjoyed a much greater share of his divine instructions than we now enjoy. As it was, much more was said and done by him than was recorded; (John xxi. 25.) and if the world had known how to appreciate his character and divine teachings, it is presumed he would have made larger discoveries of the nature of his kingdom, and of the riches of his grace than he did; for though his "delight was with the sons of men, he could not do many mighty works among them, because of their unbelief." But though he has left

the world, as to his bodily presence, his absence has been graciously supplied by the presence of the Holy Spirit, and the teachings which he left unfinished have been completed by the Spirit of Truth, agreeably to his gracious promise, "He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance." This was the legacy which our blessed Lord bequeathed to his disciples, a little before his departure, and how well it has been improved by his apostles we may see by their admirable writings, in which there is but little of the obscurity of the prophets, and very little of the parabolic style of the Saviour, except in the Apocalypse, both which might be needful at the time, but now no longer necessary.

It is a fact most worthy of observation, though not often adverted to, that each succeeding dispensation of grace exceeds its forerunner in brightness and glory. The dispensation of the Father, if we may so speak, was one of great power and glory. But there was much of the terrible mixed with that season of mercy; and the words of Job, in reference to that period, may be applied with great propriety—"With God is terrible majesty."

With the opening of the gospel dispensation, there was much less of the terrible majesty of God, and much more of his tender mercy, than in the former dispensation. As applied to this period, how beautiful are the words of Zacharias, "And thou, child, shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways. To give knowledge of salvation unto his people, by the remission of their sins;

through the tender mercy of our God, whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us." (Luke i. 77—79.) And with the ushering in of that milder dispensation, how remarkable was this tender mercy of God displayed. Behold the heavenly teacher, seated on the mount, while listening thousands gather near him ! He opens his mouth, and clusters of blessings fall from his lips. Now let us look at the scene described in the Acts of the Apostles, "when the day of Pentecost was fully come," and the dispensation of the Spirit was opened upon the Gentile world, as well as upon the Jews. At the giving of the Law, the guilty were condemned. At the promulgation of the Gospel, the mourner was encouraged to hope. But at the opening of the kingdom of Christ on the day of Pentecost, when "the Spirit descended in tokens of fire," the guilty were forgiven. To a very few indeed did God the Father condescend to speak. God the Son addressed multitudes, but they were the "lost sheep of the house of Israel," and to none else was he sent. But God the Spirit, by the ministry of his chosen servants, opened the kingdom of heaven to the people of all nations, to "Parthians, Medes, Elamites, Mesopotamians, strangers of Rome, Cretes and Arabians, Jews and Proselytes." And to all these Peter said, "The promise is unto you, and to your children, and unto all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

This extension of the kingdom of Christ was matter of surprise to the Jews, no doubt. Peter himself was hardly persuaded to believe it at first. At length, however, when he saw what God had

done for Cornelius, he exclaimed in the fulness of his heart, "Of a truth, I perceive that God is no respecter of persons." The same was the case with those that were with him, for as Peter was speaking in the house of Cornelius, the Holy Ghost fell on them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision (*Jews*) which believed, were astonished, because that on the Gentiles was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Act iii. 34—45.) It was the same with the elders and disciples at Jerusalem, to whom Peter rehearsed this matter. At first they contended with him, for what they deemed an irregularity; but when he had explained the matter, they saw it in a different light, and "held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." (Acts xi. 18.) In this view of the subject, we may all say, "If the ministration of death was glorious, shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious? and if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth; and if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory." (2 Cor. iii. 7—11.)

3. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to "reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment," or, in other words, to awaken in men's minds a deep and lasting concern for their eternal interests. Thousands of sermons are delivered, which, though studied with great care, arranged with considerable skill, and uttered with the greatest sincerity and zeal, do but little good, because they are unaccompanied by any special operation of the Holy Spirit.

Though "good seed" in themselves, they perish, because they fall on "stony ground," or by the "way side," or "among thorns." The ground was not prepared by the softening, warming, purifying influences of the Good Spirit, and these influences were not given, because they were not asked. What an excellent form of prayer is that which is used at the ordination of elders and bishops,—

"Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,
And lighten with celestial fire," &c.

Let the people pray, and the Spirit will be given. Let the Spirit but accompany the word, and wonders will be wrought in the name of the Lord Jesus. May the God of our fathers, who felt and acknowledged their need of Divine influence, "send down his Holy Spirit upon all bishops and clergy, and upon all congregations committed to their charge."

The importance of this subject must be seen by all who are born of the Spirit. Let any one refer to his own experience, and he will find that his most favored times were, when the Spirit, unquenched, and unresisted, was suffered to operate upon the mind. Preaching, without the Spirit, is hard work; sometimes a mere physical exertion, a mental toil, a useless labor; scarcely sufficient to keep the hearer awake; seldom interesting enough to secure his attention; never, of itself, sufficient to awaken and convert souls. Prayer, without the Spirit, is a cold and lifeless work, not sufficient to arouse the great adversary of souls, so that it is more poetical than true, that

— "Satan trembles when he sees
The weakest saint upon his knees."

Yet as “the Spirit helpeth our infirmities,” the weakest saint may become “strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.” Repentance, without the agency of the Divine Spirit, will never change the heart, but will invariably end in death ; and Religion, without the Spirit, is no better than the form of godliness, without the life-giving power. “It is the Spirit that giveth life.” A whole host of professors, without the Spirit, would be no better than Ezekiel’s army, when as yet “there was no breath in them.” Nay, worse, for if we are not under the influence of the Good Spirit, we shall be led by a contrary one, and then, farewell to love and joy and peace, and to all hope in Christ, for “if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”

The beginnings of divine life in the soul, are the work of the Spirit. When and how this divine life commences, and how it is maintained, we may not be able to describe, any more than we can describe the process of vegetation, or comprehend how the waters at first brought forth abundantly both fish and fowl. “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and we hear the sound thereof, but cannot tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth : so is every one that is born of the Spirit.” We see and hear the effects of the wind, but where and how the first impulse was given, that produces the motion in the air, and where, and why that impulse ceases, we know not : so it is with the work of the Spirit on the human heart, it is *felt within*,—the effects are *seen without*, but the cause and the manner of the operation we cannot explain.

4. It belongs to the Spirit, not only to renew our souls in righteousness, “after the image of Him that created us,” but also to witness our adoption, or to bear testimony *to* our spirits that we are the children of God. But as this is a very important Christian doctrine, and a vital, nay a fundamental article of our holy religion, and one on which the Methodists lay great stress, I wish to express it in the words of our standard authors. Mr. Wesley expresses himself thus :—“What is that testimony of God’s Spirit which is superadded to, and conjoined with the testimony of our own spirit? How does he ‘bear witness with our spirit that we are the children of God?’ It is hard to find words in the language of men to explain ‘the deep things of God.’ Indeed, there are none that will adequately express what the children of God experience. But perhaps one might say, (desiring any who are taught of God, to correct, soften, or strengthen the expressions,) The testimony of the Spirit is an inward impression on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God directly witnesses to my spirit, that I am a child of God ; that Jesus Christ hath loved me, and given himself for me ; and that all my sins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God.

“That this testimony of the Spirit of God must needs, in the very nature of things, be antecedent to the testimony of our own spirit, may appear from this single consideration : We must be holy in heart and life, before we are conscious that we are so ;—before we can have the testimony of our spirit that we are inwardly and outwardly holy. But we must love God before we can be holy at all ;

this being the root of all holiness. Now we cannot love God, till we know he loves us ;—‘ we love him because he first loved us.’ And we cannot know his pardoning love to us, till his Spirit witnesses it to our spirit. Since, therefore, this testimony of his Spirit must precede the love of God, and all holiness, of consequence it must precede our inward consciousness thereof, or the testimony of our own spirit concerning them.

“ Should it be still enquired, How does the Spirit of God ‘ bear witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God,’ so as to exclude all doubt, and evince the reality of our sonship ?—the answer is clear from what has been observed above. And first as to the witness of our own spirit :—the soul as intimately and evidently perceives when it loves, delights, and rejoices in God, as when it loves and delights in any thing on earth. And it can no more doubt whether it loves, delights, and rejoices in God or not, than whether it exists or not. If, therefore, this be just reasoning, he that now loves God, that delights and rejoices in him with a humble joy, and holy delight, and an obedient love, is a child of God.

“ The *manner* of the Divine testimony I do not take upon me to explain. But the fact we know ; namely, that the Spirit of God does give to a believer, such a testimony of his adoption, that, while it is present to the soul, he can no more doubt the reality of his sonship, than he can doubt of the shining of the sun, while he stands in the full blaze of his beams.”

Dr. Adam Clarke expresses himself thus :—

“ The Holy Spirit is to bear His testimony where it is absolutely necessary,—where it can be properly discerned,—where it can be fully understood,—and where it cannot be mistaken : viz. in their hearts ; or, as St. Paul says, Rom. viii. 16, *the Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit.* The Spirit of God with the spirit of man—Spirit with spirit. Intelligence with intelligence,—the testimony given and received by the same kind of agency. A spiritual agent in a spiritual substance.

“ This witness is not borne in their passions, nor in impressions made upon their imagination ; for this must be from its very nature, doubtful and evanescent ; but it is borne in their understanding, not by a transitory manifestation, but continually : unless a man by sins of omission or commission, grieve that Divine Spirit, and cause him to withdraw his testimony, which is the same thing as the Divine approbation. And God cannot continue to the soul a sense of His approbation, when it has departed from the holy commandment that was given to it. But even in this case, the man may return by repentance and faith to God, through Christ, when pardon will be granted and the witness restored.

“ Whenever this Spirit comes, it bears a testimony to itself. It shows that it is the Divine Spirit by its own light ; and he who receives it is perfectly satisfied of this. It brings a light, a power, and a conviction, more full, more clear, and more convincing to the understanding and judgment, than they ever had, or ever can have, of any fact brought before the intellect. The man knows that it is the Divine Spirit, and he knows and feels that it bears

testimony to the state of grace in which he stands.

“So convincing and satisfactory is this testimony, that a man receiving it is enabled to call God his Father, with the utmost filial confidence. Surprised and convinced, he cries out at once, Abba, Father! my Father! my Father! Having as full a confidence that he is a child of God, as the most tenderly beloved child has of his filiation to his natural parent. He has the ‘full assurance of faith’—the meridian evidence that puts all doubts to flight.

“And this, as was observed above, continues; for it is the very voice of the indwelling Spirit—‘the Spirit of his Son,’ which continues to cry, Abba Father, in the heart of the true believer. And it is ever worthy of remark, that when a man has been unfaithful to the grace given, or has fallen into any kind of sin, he has no power to utter this cry. The Spirit is grieved, and has departed, and the cry is lost! No power of the man’s reason, or fancy, or imagination, can restore this cry. Were he to utter the words with his lips, his heart would disown them. But on the other hand, while he continues faithful, the witness is continued, the light, and the conviction, and the cry are maintained. It is the glory of this grace that no man can command this cry, and none can assume it. Where it is, it is the faithful and true witness: where it is not, all is uncertainty and doubt.”

The views of Mr. Watson are as follows:

“Our own spirits can take no cognizance of the mind of God as to our actual pardon, and can bear

no witness to that fact. The Holy Spirit only, who knows the mind of God, can be this witness ; and if the fact that God is reconciled to us can only be known by him, by him only can it be attested to us. It cannot, therefore, be as well for us to have recourse at once to the evidence of our own spirits, because, as to this fact our own spirits have no evidence to give. They cannot give *direct* evidence of it ; for we know not what passes in the mind of the invisible God : they cannot give *indirect* evidence of the fact ; for no moral changes, of which our spirits can be conscious, have been stated in scripture, as the proofs of our pardon ; they prove that there is a work of grace in our hearts, but they are not proofs of our actual forgiveness. Our own spirits are competent witnesses that such moral effects have been produced in our hearts and character, as it is the office of the Holy Spirit to produce : they prove, therefore, the reality of the presence of the Holy Spirit with us and in us. That competent and infallible witness has borne his testimony that God is become our Father ; he has shed abroad his holy comfort—the comfort which arises from a sense of pardon—and his moral operation within us, accompanying or immediately following upon this, making us new creatures in Christ Jesus, is the proof that we are in no delusion as to the witness who gives this testimony being the Spirit of God.”

In addition to the above, let the following observations of Professor Witsius be seriously regarded.

“The Spirit cheers us also in another form, by causing us to know the things that are freely given us of God. (1 Cor. ii. 12.) This he doth by secretly

witnessing to our spirit and with our spirit. (Rom. viii. 16.) And truly, it is the voice of the Spirit only that is able to raise up the soul bowed down under the weight of its sorrows. Although a person should speak with the tongue of men and of angels, whilst the internal operation of the Spirit doth not concur, he will prove a miserable comforter. But a single word of the Spirit has greater efficacy than a thousand discourses addressed to the outward ear, by all the prophets, evangelists, and apostles, nay, by the Lord Jesus himself, unaccompanied by the inward teaching of the Spirit.”—(*Dissertations on the Creed.*)

Thus it is peculiarly the work of the Spirit to comfort believers with an assurance of their adoption. God does not now speak with an audible voice from heaven, as he did to Abraham and the prophets, in days of old. He does not now speak to us by the voice of his beloved Son. But he speaks to us now in his word, and that word is accompanied by the energy of his Spirit. Nay, further, he speaks to us by the *immediate* operation of his Spirit on our heart. Let it not be accounted enthusiasm thus to talk of the work of the Spirit. Other churches, and other ministers, talk thus as well as the Methodists. The Church of England and the Protestant Episcopal Church pray thus—“O God make clean our heart within us; And take not thy Holy Spirit from us.” And Dr. Watts, in one of his excellent hymns, prays thus :

“Assure my conscience of her part
In the Redeemer’s blood,
And bear *thy witness* with my heart
That I am born of God.”

One of the old Puritan Divines speaks thus—"Another office of the Spirit is *immediate*—it is a bright irradiation of the Holy Ghost, beaming out upon the soul, witnessing to the soul its adoption by Jesus Christ, and right and title to the kingdom of God." Robert Hall says, "It belongs to the Spirit to seal us to the day of redemption; to put that mark and character upon us which distinguish the children of God, as well as to afford a foretaste and an earnest of the future inheritance." Similar language, and expressions equally strong, are used by those venerable Prelates of the English church, whose names are an honor to the age in which they lived; viz. Bishops Pearson, Hooker, Hooper, Horsley, Andrew, Brownrigg, Usher, and others, as quoted by Mr. Watson, in his Theological Institutes, ch. xxiv. Part II.

But here a question arises, which it may be well to consider and answer: it is this—"How are these operations of the Spirit on the human mind to be distinguished from the workings of our own imagination, and from the suggestions of the adversary of souls?"

It is certainly a matter of infinite and eternal importance to be set right here; for delusion in this matter is the more to be dreaded, as it is our soul's interest that is at stake, and it is for eternity, as well as for time. But at this stage of the inquiry, it may be well to remind the reader, that "the natural (*the unrenewed*) man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, (*but by the Spirit*), because they are spiritually discerned," the truth of

which remark will appear, if we consider how foolish the whole of religion appears to some, how unreasonable some parts of it appear to others, and how absurd some parts of Christian doctrine appear to others. One man wonders that Christians should think that one part of time is more sacred than another; another laughs at the folly of those who suppose that there is a personal devil and an everlasting hell. In fact, there are Pharisees and Sadducees now, as well as in our Lord's time. One of the greatest ornaments of English literature has laid it down as an axiom, *that a man cannot be conscious of his acceptance with God in this world*, "because no man can know that he has repented *sufficiently*." Whereas, of all the sinners in the world, that man would be farthest from remission of sins, if the gospel be true, who should judge that he *had* repented "*sufficiently*!" This same great man, when near death, was afraid to enter the eternal world, and when some of his friends, in order to comfort him, reminded him of the great good he had done, he exclaimed, "Ah! but how can I tell when I have done *enough*." [See Mrs. Hannah More's account of the last hours of Dr. Samuel Johnson, in the 1st vol. of her memoirs, lately published.]

There is, it would seem, a very unreasonable prejudice against what is called the *immediate inspiration* of God, and the doctrine of *sensible impressions*. We admit that man can speak to his fellow man so as to be understood, but we deny, or doubt at least, that God, who made man, can so speak to his spirit as to be understood. If it be inquired, "By

what means do we distinguish one man from another?" the answer is, "By his personal appearance." If it be inquired again, "How do we distinguish one man from another without seeing them?" the answer is, "By the sound of the voice!" But how shall a person who is not only *blind*, but *deaf* also, distinguish one from another? We are acquainted with one* who is not only *blind*, but *deaf* and *dumb* also, and yet she can distinguish between a friend and a stranger. She has a method of discerning one from another, whether it is by the smell or touch, we cannot say, but suppose it to be by *sensible impressions* made on some of the bodily organs, and by that means conveyed to the mind. Now it would be strange indeed if He who formed the eye could not see; if He who planted the ear could not hear; and it would be equally strange if He who formed man's spirit, or breathed it into him, should not be able to hold communion with him.

Christ gives us to understand, in the tenth chapter of John, that his sheep know his voice, but a stranger they will not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers. If, then, Christians can distinguish the voice of Christ from the voice of strangers, the question is, "*How* do they do it?" They do not hear it with the outward ear; they do not see him with the bodily eye; they cannot *touch* him now, for he has ascended to heaven. How then do they know his voice, or discern the operation of his hand? the answer is, "*By sensible impressions.*" —"Spirit with spirit," as Dr. Clarke says, the

* Julia Brace, at the American Asylum, Hartford.

Spirit of God operating upon the spirit of man. When one speaks to another, a *sensible impression* is made upon the soul, through the medium of hearing; and by the *manner* of speaking, we discern whether he speaks to us in anger or in love. So when a stranger, whom we never saw before, speaks to us, or enters into conversation with us, we can soon discover what spirit he is of. If he treat with levity and scorn the solemn verities of the Christian religion; if he ridicule the idea of divine revelation, and deny the being of a God, we say at once, he is an infidel! By these plain marks we know that his voice is not that of a friend! So, when a *strong impression* is made on my mind—a temptation to blaspheme the name of God—an impression that he is cruel or unjust, and a temptation to rebel against him, I know, on a little reflection, that “an enemy hath done this, and that that enemy is **THE DEVIL!**” It is not the voice of nature, nor of reason, nor of “divine philosophy,” nor of revelation, nor of man, nor of Christ, nor of God. So when a strong impression is made on my mind that all my past sins are blotted out, and this impression is accompanied with a portion of God’s own word, as for example, “Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee,” and at the same instant, “fear gives place to filial love, and peace o’erflows my heart”—and more especially, when all this comes upon me after a season of deep conviction for sin, of darkness and doubt, of grief and pain, and earnest struggling in prayer for this very blessing, I know that it is not a delusion of the devil, for it is not according to his character to give peace to penitent souls, and

to set at liberty those that are bound, but to accuse and perplex, and trouble and condemn.

But may not all this be the work of fancy? It is presumed not; for

1. Though it may be consistent with our natural depravity for us to seek to justify ourselves *in* our sins before men, yet no man in his senses will be ready to despair at one moment, and rejoice the next “with joy unspeakable and full of glory,” without some supernatural cause; and more especially as it is the prerogative of God alone to condemn and to acquit. There may be a false peace, we admit, but that will invariably be accompanied with a love of sin, in some way or other; whereas, true peace is always attended with an abhorrence of sin. Satan may be permitted, as in the temptation of Christ, to bring the scriptures to our remembrance. He might even whisper “God is love,” and bring it forward as an appropriate text to support a false doctrine, but he will never teach us to love our enemies, to forgive them, and to pray for them! When, therefore, these sudden impressions are attended with the answer of a good conscience, and are followed by the fruits of the Spirit, such as “love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, patience, humility, and brotherly-kindness,” we may know that they are from the Spirit of God. Wherever the fruits of the Spirit are found, there we may be sure the Spirit of God resides; and whenever the Spirit of God whispers peace, *it will always carry its own evidence with it!* Who ever “gathered grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?” If the fruit be good, can the tree be evil?

It is by the light of the sun that we see the sun, and he must have very poor optics that cannot see that luminary at noon-day, when he shines without a cloud. We should account that man deceived who should say the sun shines on him at midnight, when it is darkness all around; but let us not say it is midnight, and the sun does not shine, because we are blind, when there are many witnesses at hand who can testify that the sun shines, and that they can see his light as well as feel his beams. An unconverted man may be a stranger to these inward feelings, but depend upon it, when by divine grace he is made a partaker of them, he will know what they mean, and from whence they come.

2. These feelings are experienced by thousands every year, who by the grace of God can set to their seal that He is true. There are thousands of living witnesses who have passed from death unto life, who can tell you the time and the place where the Lord spoke peace to their souls. Their former lives proclaimed to all around that they were the children of the wicked one: their present conduct is a proof that their feelings and impressions at the time alluded to, were not the "visions of a wild enthusiast," nor "the day dreams of an ignorant fanatic." They can sing with the poet,

"Long my imprison'd spirit lay,
Fast bound in sin and nature's night:
Thine eye diffus'd a quickening ray,
I woke, the dungeon flam'd with light;
My chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and followed thee."

C. Wesley.

On this subject, Mr. J. Wesley, with his usual perspicuity, speaks thus :—" How am I assured that I do not mistake the voice of the Spirit ? Even by the testimony of my own spirit ; by the answer of a good conscience from God : hereby you shall know that you are in no delusion, that you have not deceived your own soul. The *immediate* fruits of the Spirit ruling in the heart, are love, joy, peace, humbleness of mind, meekness, gentleness, longsuffering ; and the outward fruits are, the doing good to all men, and a uniform obedience to all the commands of God."

Professor Witsius, before quoted, speaks thus :—" Nor is it very difficult for believers, provided they give due attention and diligence, to distinguish these operations of the Spirit from the illusions of the flesh or of a malignant demon, or even from those common operations of the Spirit which are unproductive of holiness. This appears from the words of our Lord : 'Even the Spirit of Truth whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him ; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.' These operations are discerned, both from their very *nature*, when separately considered ; and from the *order* in which they are wisely connected, and the *relation* they bear to one another. In each of them there is a brightness, majesty, and efficacy, so conspicuous and striking, that the light of noon-day doth not more clearly discover the sun, than these operations discover the Spirit as their author." (*Wes. Meth. Mag.* 1824, p. 542.)

Let us now enquire, What is our duty in reference to the Holy Spirit ? And,

1. As a Spirit of Divine illumination, let us pray for his influence. "Lighten our darkness, O Lord, we beseech thee." "Grant us thy Holy Spirit, that those things may please thee which we do at this present, and that the rest of our life may be pure and holy." "Grant us, Lord, we beseech thee, the Spirit, to think and do always such things as are right and pleasing in thy sight." "And, forasmuch as without thee, we are not able to please thee, mercifully grant that thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts."* And while we thus pray, let us remember, for our encouragement, the words of Christ, "If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give his Holy Spirit to those that ask him." Let us beware, also, of quenching this heavenly light within us. This may be done by neglect of duty—by mixing with wordly company, when neither business nor duty require it—by what are called little sins, and by a light and trifling, as well as any other unholy spirit.

2. As a convincing Spirit, whose business it is to reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, let us pray that he would work mightily in the hearts of unbelievers, that he would awaken and alarm them, that he would strip them of their self-righteousness, and show them their guilt and danger.

3. As a guide into all truth, we should submit our understandings to his divine teaching, and pray that he would preserve our minds from error, and

*Church service.

lead them into all truth. What heavenly thoughts can he not inspire? What wise directions can he not suggest? What a happy train of reflections can he not induce? What holy purposes, pious resolutions, good determinations, and gracious dispositions, can he not raise in our weak and distempered minds?

4. As a quickening Spirit, or the author of regeneration, we should pray that his word may be quick and powerful, and that dead souls may be raised to life by his divine power. How can a fallen spirit, "dead in trespasses and sins," raise himself to newness of life? Can a dead body quicken itself? "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, and the leopard his spots?" How can a man change his own heart, "purpose," or "preference," unless he have a disposition so to do? And how can he have this gracious disposition unless he ask it of God?

5. As the Spirit of adoption, we should pray that he would witness with our spirits that we are born of God, and that we might "know what is the hope of our calling;"—that we might "rejoice evermore, and in every thing give thanks."

6. As a Spirit of interceding grace, we should seek his aid; we should pray that he would "help our infirmities" in prayer, "for we know not what to pray for as we ought," without his help.

7. As a refining Spirit, or the Sanctifier of his people, we should look to him for that purity and holiness without which we cannot see the Lord, and ever pray, "Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy "Holy Spirit." "Make clean, O God, our hearts within us, and take not thy Holy Spirit from us."

8. As the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, we should look to Him for comfort in all our tribulations, for support in all our afflictions, and for that divine aid under all trials, which alone can bear us up. A minister may preach the word of consolation—a friend may speak kindly,—but it is the Holy Spirit only that can impart solid peace in the hour of trial.

9. As the Spirit that seals the sons of God, we should endeavor to regard and treat him as our best friend, *our indwelling and abiding friend* ! Our earthly friends may die—a brother may depart—a sister may sicken and fade away—a husband may change—a wife prove unkind—creatures may fail, but the Holy Spirit liveth and abideth for ever. Let us not *neglect* his commands. Let us not *slight* his counsels. Let us not *grieve* him, lest he take his everlasting flight, and visit us no more !

Lastly, let us bear in mind the importance of this subject. The Evangelical churches in England and elsewhere, have often taken this subject into serious consideration. In 1823, in one county in England, a regular course of lectures, amounting to *ten*, were delivered on this subject. In one city, *twenty-four* lectures were given on this subject exclusively. At several public meetings of different religious denominations, resolutions were passed recommending special prayer for the gracious outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

In an account of a late wonderful revival of religion in Sheffield, Yorkshire, in which *twelve hundred* were hopefully converted, the writer calls it “a gracious outpouring of the Holy Spirit.” And we all know what was the *immediate and most pow-*

erful cause of the greatest awakening and conversion recorded in the New Testament, viz. on the day of Pentecost—it was the extraordinary effusion of the Holy Spirit, predicted by Joel and promised by the Saviour. And in that great and glorious day, spoken of by the prophet Zechariah, when the Jews shall look upon him whom their fathers pierced, and shall mourn as one mourneth for his only son, the same Spirit will be poured out upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

“ Come Holy Spirit, Heavenly Dove,
With all thy quickening powers ;
Come, shed abroad a Saviour’s love,
And that shall kindle ours.”

“ Now to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, be all honor and glory, world without end. AMEN !”

LECTURE XII.

OF THE TRINITY.

"There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one."—1 John, v. 7.

MANY object to the doctrine of the Trinity because they cannot comprehend it. But this objection is of no weight, when it is considered that we are obliged to believe ten thousand other things, which, if they are not equally incomprehensible, are so far above the reach of our limited powers that they are necessarily mysterious to us. The Unitarian believes in one God. Can he then comprehend the divine essence? Can he tell how a being necessarily exists who had no beginning, "who ne'er began to be?" Can he tell how He is present alike in every place? Can he tell whether space is infinite or not? Can he solve the problem of infinity? Some object to the doctrine because it seems unreasonable. But how do they know what is unreasonable? Whose reason is to be the standard? To some men it seems unreasonable that the earth should turn round in twenty-four hours; to others it seems more so that it should be at rest,

and the sun and planets should move round the earth, as they appear to do to the superficial observer. If the telescope and the microscope had never been invented, our knowledge must have been very limited as it respects the objects brought to view by those wonderful instruments. The invention of the mariner's compass, and of the art of printing, have served greatly to enlarge the boundaries of our knowledge, as the discovery of the power of steam, and its present application, have served to increase our wealth and pleasure. Reason must admit that an infinite Being must know more than a finite being. Who will be so bold as to deny that the secret of perpetual motion is known to the Most High? and who that admits such a proposition, will deny the possibility of its being revealed?

“In vain do infidels and semi-infidels object to the doctrines of scripture, as being inconsistent with reason. That these doctrines rise far above the discoveries of reason, and cannot by any rational process be explained or accounted for, is allowed; but that there is in them any thing really contradictory to reason, is wholly denied. Reason has its own province, within which its services are indispensable. But if reason go beyond its appointed province, and presume to judge and decide about matters too high for its apprehension, it only discovers its own weakness and inefficiency; it shows the limitation of its own powers, and convinces us that beyond certain boundaries it has no means whatever of acquiring knowledge, and is

therefore wholly incompetent to form any judgment.”—(*Rev. W. P. Burgess.*)

Right reason is to the mind what the eye is to the body. It often sees things indistinctly for want of clearer light, and some things it cannot see at all, because they are at so great a distance. When clearer light is obtained, or the object is brought sufficiently near, it sees them as they are. By the aid of a good telescope, we can see stars that we never could have discovered by the naked eye; and by the aid of divine revelation we can discover things which unassisted reason never could have found out. But it is necessary to look through the telescope in order to see the stars; and it is no less necessary to look into the volume of divine revelation to see those things which the naked eye of reason hath not seen; and in that case,

“ *Faith* lends its realizing light—
The clouds disperse—the shadows fly :
The invisible appears in sight,
And God is seen by *reason's* eye;”

If reason be a *natural* faculty of the human mind, it must be as strong and as perfect in the mind of an atheist as in any one else! How then are we to account for the fact of his atheism? If, on the other hand, faith be a *moral* quality of the human mind, why should we wonder that some men deny the doctrine of the Trinity? Unreasonableness and unbelief generally go together. They were so associated in the mind of the apostle, who prayed that he might be delivered from “unreasonable and

wicked men," assigning as a reason, "all men have not faith." If, therefore, any one should say, "*I cannot* believe the doctrine of the Trinity," supposing it to be a doctrine of Holy Scripture, we may justly suspect either the strength of his mind or the goodness of his heart.

We have already proved from the scriptures that Jesus Christ is a divine person; and we have also proved that the Holy Ghost is a divine person, and as there is no question but the Father is a divine person, it will therefore follow that these three divine persons are one God. This is the point to be proved in the present Lecture.

The subject is one of deep and solemn interest. It is one of pure revelation—one that unassisted reason never could have discovered; but if found in the holy scriptures, must be believed at the peril of our souls. On no subject is the inadequacy of human language so much felt as on this. Our very conceptions, even to their utmost stretch, fall infinitely below the elevated theme: how much more incompetent, then, must be any attempted expression of the awful reality. And how reasonable the supposition, that He, whose very being is incomprehensible, should be so in the manner of his existence. The Psalmist has said, "Holy and reverend is his name." Let us, therefore, approach the subject with the devoutest awe, for the ground on which we now tread is holy. Nor is any mind fitted for the contemplation, unless deeply imbued with reverential caution. This spirit is repeatedly inculcated in the sacred writings, and is always necessary for a rational and profitable survey of the divine character.

And, since the Bible is not in itself a complete religious dictionary; and the English version, though perhaps the best extant, cannot be identified as the language of inspiration, there must, of necessity, be some words brought into requisition which are not literally and verbally scriptural. Of this character is the term **TRINITY**, implying *three in one*—a doctrine which is most unequivocally contained in the general phraseology of scripture, but especially in such texts as these: “Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” Matt. xxviii. 19. “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost be with you.” 2 Cor. xiii. 14. On the first of these texts, St. Jerome, who lived in the fourth century of the Christian era, remarks, “We are *thrice* dipped in the water, that the mystery of the Trinity may appear to be but one. We are not baptized in the *names* of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, but in one name, which is God’s; and therefore, though we be *thrice* put under water to represent the mystery of the Trinity, yet it is reputed but one baptism.” Justin Martyr, who lived in the second century, says, “We worship the Father, Son, and Spirit.” And Tertullian, who lived in the same century, says, “There is a Trinity of one divinity, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost.” To these positive testimonies may be added a negative argument: those who acknowledge the divinity of Christ and of the Holy Ghost, are never called *heretics* by any writer of the first three centuries, which is surely a

strong proof that the doctrine of the Trinity was the doctrine of the primitive church. (*Watson.*)

But if the term Trinity be not found in the scriptures, neither is the term Deity, nor even Providence, as applied to God, and yet who, except an Atheist, will deny either the one or the other? "The propriety of employing these terms," says Dr. J. P. Smith, "rests upon the same foundation, as the use of general terms in all other investigations, namely, they are abbreviations of language, and serve as instruments of thought. It is unreasonable to object that these identical words are not found in scripture. The proper consideration is, whether the objects and facts for which they are used, are there or not." My design, in this Lecture, is not to speak in my own words, nor in the words of uninspired men, so much as in "those words, and in that wisdom which the Holy Ghost teacheth," believing, with Mr. Watson, that, "the moment we begin to explain this subject beyond the written word of God, we plunge ourselves into inextricable difficulties."

The first intimation of the doctrine of a trinity of persons in the Godhead, is in the first chapter of Genesis. The name of God, as it there stands in the Hebrew Bible, is in the plural form, and if literally translated, would be "In the beginning GODS created the heavens and the earth." The same remark will apply to the first verse in the 12th chapter of Ecclesiastes, "Remember now thy CREATORS." And the same also in reference to Malachi i. 6, "If I be ADONIM (Masters,) where is my fear?" If we admit that the terms JEHOVAH ELO-

HIM, properly translated, would be "The Lord thy Gods," we must allow, to go no farther, that this doctrine is implied in the very name of God.

But in addition to this, we have the testimony of the Holy Spirit himself, to assure us of a plurality of persons in the Godhead, for in the 1st chapter of Genesis, 26th ver., it is recorded that God said "Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness." And again in the 3rd chapter, "Behold, the man is become as one of us," not simply "us," but "one of us." So also, in the 6th chapter of Isaiah, we meet with a plurality of persons in the Godhead. "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and he said, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" In this passage the term "Holy" is *thrice* repeated, and St. John, in the 12th chapter of his Gospel, assures us that the prophet in this place spoke of Christ.

It is observed by Dr. Kidd, in his Essay on the Trinity, that the repetition of the term God, in every act of the creation, recorded in the first chapter of Genesis, would be tautology in any other view than that of a Trinity of persons in the Godhead, but with this in view, all is plain. And the same may be said with regard to the form of blessing recorded in the 6th chapter of the book of Numbers. "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee : The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee : The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." This threefold repetition of the word Lord, is very striking ; it is very similar to the apostolic benediction ; the one expressive of the first, the other of the second, and the

other of the third person of the divine Essence. The very same use of the word is found in Isaiah xxxiii. 22. "The Lord is our Judge; The Lord is our Lawgiver; The Lord is our King." A similar form of expression is used by David, as recorded in the 2d book of Samuel, xxiii. 2, 3: "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me—The God of Israel said—The Rock of Israel spake." A similar phraseology is also used in the New Testament, Rev. iv. 8. "And they rest not day nor night, saying Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." And again, in Ephesians iv. 4—6, "There is one Spirit, one Lord, one God." And again, in St. Paul's 1st Epistle to the Corinthians xii. 4—6, "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit: There are differences of administrations, but the same Lord: There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh in all."

I shall now endeavor to prove that the *names, attributes, and actions* of God the Father, belong equally to the Son, and Spirit; from whence it will follow, if Christ be God, and the Holy Ghost be God, in *name, attribute, and action*, and there be but one God, in nature and essence, that "*these three are one.*"

1. The *Name* of God is applied to the Father in every part of the scriptures—this needs no proof. It is equally true that the same name is applied to the Son, in Psalm xlv. as quoted by St. Paul, Heb. i. 8. "Thy throne, O God, is for ever." In Isaiah, also, he is called "The Mighty God:"—in Paul's epistle to Titus, "The Great God:"—and

in his epistles to Timothy, “The living God”—“The blessed God”—“The only wise God,” and “God our Saviour.” The same name also is applied to the Holy Ghost, in the Acts of the Apostles—“Then Peter said to Ananias, Why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Ghost? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.” And in Paul’s epistle to the Colossians, Chap. ii. ver. 2 ; as also in 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17.

2. The *Attributes* of God are possessed equally by the Son and Spirit, as by the Father. Is *Eternity* an attribute of the Father? so it is of the Son. John viii. 58 ; 1 Tim. i. 17 ; Rev. i. 8, and 17 ; and so it is of the Holy Ghost. Heb. ix. 14. Is *Omnipresence* an attribute of the Father? so it is of the Son. Matt. xviii. 20 ; and so it is of the Spirit. Psalm cxxxix. 7—12. Is *Omniscience* an attribute of the Father? so it is of the Son and Spirit—compare Psalm cxxxix. 23, with Jer. xvii. 10 : Rev. ii. 23 ; Rom. viii. 27 ; and 1 Cor. ii. 10. Is *Foreknowledge* an attribute of the Father? so it is of the Son and Spirit. 1 Pet. i. 11 ; 1 Tim. iv. 1 ; Matt. xxiv. 24. Is *Omnipotence* an attribute of the Father? so it is of the Son and Spirit. Gen. i. 1 ; John i. 3 ; Psalm civ. 30.

3. The *Works* of Omnipotence are performed equally by the Son and Spirit, as by the Father. Is *Creation* the work of the Father? so it is of the Son and Spirit,—compare Gen. i. 1, with John i. 3 ; Eph. iii. 9 ; Col. i. 16 ; Gen. i. 2 ; Job. xxvi. 13 ; Psalm xxxiii. 6 ; Job xxxiii. 4 ; Ps. civ. 30. Now observe, if the works of creation be ascribed equally and indiscriminately to the Son and Spirit, as to

the Father, as they certainly are in the above passages, then it follows that the Son is a divine person, and the Holy Ghost is a divine person, and that these three persons are One God.

The work of *Regeneration*, sometimes called a *new creation*, is ascribed equally to the Son and Spirit, as to the Father,—compare John i. 13, with James i. 18 ; John v. 25 ; vi. 33 ; iii. 5—8 ; Titus iii. 5 ; 1 Tim. vi. 13 ; John v. 21 ; 2 Cor. iii. 6.

The *Resurrection of the dead* is also ascribed to the Son and Spirit, as well as to the Father. Compare John v. 21, and vi. 39—54, with 2 Cor. i. 9 : 1 Cor. xv. 45 ; Rom. viii. 11 ; John ii. 19 ; 1 Pet. iii. 18. Here we see that the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them ; that the Son hath life in himself, and quickeneth whom he will ; that he raised himself from the dead ; (John ii. 19,) that the Father raised him ; (Acts iii. 15,) and that he was quickened by the Spirit ; (1 Pet. iii. 18,) who shall also raise us up at the last day, (Rom. viii. 11.) So that it is clear that these three great works of Omnipotence ;—*creation*, *regeneration*, and the *resurrection of the dead*, are ascribed equally to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, consequently these three are equal and worthy of equal honor. It appears, also, that the work of *Inspiration* is equally the work of the Father, Son, and Spirit, for it was God the Father that inspired the holy prophets to foretell future events ; it was “the Spirit of Christ, also, that was in them, that testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.” It was also the Holy Spirit

that moved the holy prophets to write and speak as they did. (1 Peter i. 11; 2 Peter i. 21.)


To the above may be added the following considerations :

1. No *fourth* person is ever associated with or ever considered equal with God the Father Almighty. When Christ was baptized, the Holy Ghost descended upon him, and the Father said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." So when Christians are baptized, it is done in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. So also when the blessing of God is invoked, and the benediction pronounced, the names of the three sacred persons are mentioned, but never more. No Christian minister ever baptized in the name of Peter, or even of Mary, the mother of Christ's human nature, or prayed that the grace of Paul or of Apollos might be with the people of God.

2. The words of Christ, as recorded by St. John in his last discourse, are all in accordance with this doctrine : "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever." John xiv. 16. "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me." John xv. 16. "All things that the Father hath are mine; therefore said I, that He, the Comforter, shall take of mine and show it unto you." John xvi. 15. Had not this doctrine been the true one, we may well suppose that Christ would have apprized his disciples of it; he would have said in this case,

as well as in a former, “if it were not so I would have told you ;” but he gave no such intimations ; the presumption therefore is, that the Father, Son, and Spirit, are equal, and that all men should honor the Son and Spirit, even as they honor the Father.

3. The idea of a Trinity of persons in the Godhead, has obtained in all ages, and among all nations. The Jews, who were always taught to believe in the unity of God, and accounted it blasphemy in Christ, supposing him to be a mere man, to count himself equal with God, according to their own writers, Philo Judæus and Moses Nachmanides, as cited by Grotius and quoted by Nelson, in his book of devotion, made this distinction in the Godhead ; and so, say these learned authors, did Plato, the Gentile philosopher.

A sect of Jews in Poland, called *Soharites*, from their veneration for the book of *Sohar*, a cabalistical work, which they receive as the highest authority, on their settlement in that country published a confession of faith, from which the following is extracted : “ We believe that though there is but one God, yet that there are three persons in the Deity, which, without any separation or distinction from each other, form a perfect unity. This truth is not only contained in the books of Moses, but also in all the writings of the prophets, and other parts of the holy Scriptures. It is said in the *Sohar* that the *Thorah* begins with the letter  Beth, which is formed by two horizontal lines and one vertical, that point to the unity of the Three. This belief in the Trinity in Unity is founded upon the holy scriptures, where the doctrine is plainly taught in

innumerable instances : as a proof of this, we shall quote a few passages. It is said by Moses, Gen. i. 2, that the Spirit of *Elohim*, which is plural, moved upon the face of the waters ; were there but one person in the Deity, Moses would have expressed himself thus—the Spirit of Jehovah, or *El*, moved : from this it plainly appears that it was his object at the outset of his writings to inculcate the doctrine of a Trinity of persons in the Deity. He says further, God says, let *us* make man in *our* image after *our* likeness ; Gen. i. 26 ; upon which the Sohar comments thus : Two there are, and One, which makes three, and these three are one. Again it is said, Gen. iii. 22, Jehovah Elohim spoke, saying, behold the man is like one of *us*. If there were not three persons in the Deity, why does it read Jehovah Elohim, in the plural, when Jehovah alone would have sufficed ; it was unquestionably thus to prove the Trinity. It being said, the Lord came down to see the city and tower, Gen. xi. 5—7, and further, go to, let *us* go down and confound their language, the question naturally occurs, to whom did Jehovah speak this ? He would not have thus spoken to the angels, who are his ministering servants, to whom he would have addressed himself in the language of *command*, and not in the way of *request* ; we conclude, therefore, that God spoke to his co-equals, the other persons who are of the same authority and dignity with himself.

“ We find it further recorded, that *three* men appeared to Abraham, Gen. xviii. 2 ; and yet on seeing them he said, *My Lord* ; ver. 3. How can it otherwise be explained, that he should have seen

three, and only addressed *one*, if these *three* were not *one*? Moses commands the Israelites to take the blood of the Paschal Lamb, and strike on the two side posts, and on the upper door post; Exod. xii. 7; upon which the *Sohar* asks, why is this to be done just upon three places? In order, it is answered, that we should behold on these three places our perfect faith in the Triune and holy name of God; which is another proof of the *three* persons in the Deity. It is said by Moses, Gen. xix. 24, Then Jehovah rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from Jehovah out of heaven; which is another proof of a plurality of persons in the Deity. On the passage, Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our God is one Lord, the *Sohar* comments thus: Three are one. In Exod. iii. 6, it is said, The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob; this repetition of the word God before each name of the three patriarchs, points at the Trinity; otherwise it would have been sufficient to have said, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Joshua says, chap. xxiv. 19, Ye cannot serve the Lord, because he is holy, Elohim. Here Jehovah is put first, and then Elohim, and holy in the plural, which is another proof of the plurality in the Divine Being—a Trinity in Unity.”—(*C. B. Vol. IV. p. 257.*)

Dr. Kidd, in his Essay on the Trinity, has shown that in Hindostan, the famous statue of Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva, represents the doctrine of the Trinity. That part representing Brahma is considered the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver, and Siva the Regenerator. These statues are more than three thousand years old. Zoroaster, the

great philosopher of Persia and Chaldea, speaks thus : “ A Triad of Deity shines forth through the whole world, and thus appears in this Triad, virtue, wisdom, and truth.” The same doctrine is preserved in tradition in Scythia, Thibet, Tartary, and Siberia. “ In the lofty hall of Odin, the Scandinavian god, the roof of which is of brilliant gold, are three thrones, raised one above another, and upon each throne sits a sacred personage. The first is *HAR, the lofty one* ; the second is *JAFNHAR, equal to the lofty one* ; and he who sits on the highest throne is called *THRIDI, the third*. The same doctrine prevails in China, of which the symbol is a character like the Greek Delta. In Egypt, the land of symbols and hieroglyphics, a circle represented the Divine Essence, and a triangle [the Divine Persons. In Greece, Orpheus, who believed and taught the unity of God, declared that all things were made by one Godhead, *in three names*. The Romans had a particular respect for the number *three*. The *Fates* were three ; the *Furies* three ; the *Graces* three, and the *Muses*, which are now three times three, were originally three. Among the ancient Druids, Odin, Frea, and Thor, were the principal deities.”—(*Kidd*.)

“ The heathen philosophers,” says Lord Bolingbroke, “ assumed a trinity of divine hypostases (*personalities*) in the Godhead. They held a *Monad*, or unity, above all essence ; a *second* proceeding eternally from the first, and a *third* proceeding eternally from the second.” The same author speaks of the Egyptian, Pythagorean, Platonic, Zoroastrian, Chaldaic, and Samothracian Trinity.

Chevalier Ramsay has carried this matter still farther, and has endeavored to show that some vestiges of the doctrine of the trinity are to be found among all nations, times, and religions. (*Leland.*)

If it be objected that the early Christians borrowed the idea of a Triune God from the Jews, and that the Jews borrowed it from the disciples of Plato, we may ask, whence did the Platonists themselves derive such an idea? It is not surely so simple or obvious, as to be likely to have occurred to the mind of a pagan philosopher; or if it be, why should Unitarians suppose it to involve a contradiction? How can we account for the universality of such an idea, as has been shown in the foregoing quotations, unless we admit that all nations of the earth received their first principles of religion by traditions from their ancestors? It is much more reasonable and satisfactory to conclude that all mankind derived their ideas of God and of religion, originally from one general revelation, made in the remotest ages of the world, and that they were corrupted as they passed down from one generation to another. Admitting this, we cannot but admire the goodness of God in giving us the volume of revelation, so admirably calculated as it is to correct all errors on these subjects, and to preserve the truth pure and uncorrupt to the latest periods of time. We may not be able to satisfy every doubt, and answer every objection that can be raised against the doctrine of the Trinity, but to such persons as are candid and sincere, the following observations will commend themselves as worthy of regard:

“If such doctrines were not above our reason,

there needed no revelation of them, but only a bare proposal of them to our reason, made by any body, without any authority, and their own evidence would carry them through. As to the contradiction alleged in three being one, it is no contradiction, unless it be said that three are one in the self same respects ; for in divers respects there is no difficulty, that one may be three, or three thousand ; as one army may consist of many thousand persons, and yet it is but one army. There is but one human nature, and yet there are multitudes of persons who partake of that nature. It is not said that the three persons in the divine nature are one person ; that would be a contradiction ; but it is said that the three persons are one God. They are not three and one in the same respect ; they are three as to persons, and one as to nature ; here is no contradiction. Again, that may be a contradiction in one nature, which is not so in another ; for example,—it is a contradiction to say that a man can go two miles as soon as one, when he travels at the same rate ; but it is no contradiction to say that the eye can reach the most distant star as soon as it can reach the nearest planet, for they are both seen at the same instant, though they are millions of millions of miles distant ; and thought, which is more rapid than light, can reach the utmost boundaries of creation in less time than the sun's rays can reach the earth.

“ We find in our own nature, which is said to be made after the image of God, a very near resemblance to the Holy Trinity, and of the different operations of each of the divine persons. For exam-

ple—to know a thing present, and to remember what is past, and to love or hate, are different operations of our mind, and are performed by different faculties of it. Of these, the understanding is the father faculty, and gives being to things as to us ; for what we know not, is to us as if it were not ; this answers to creation. From this faculty proceeds the second, that of memory, which is a preserving of what the understanding has created to us. Then the third faculty, that of the will, which loves or hates, proceeds from both the other ; for we cannot love or hate what is not first created by the understanding, and preserved to us by the memory. And though these are different faculties, and their operations so different that the second proceeds from the first, or is begotten by it, and the third proceeds from the first and second in conjunction ; so that one is before the other in order of nature, yet not in time, for they are all congenial, and one is as soon in the soul as the other ; and yet they make not three souls, but one soul. And though their operations are different, and the one proceeds from the other, yet no one can act without the other, and they all concur to every act of each ; for in understanding and remembering, there is a concurrent act of the will to consent to such understanding or remembering, so that no one can act without the other ; in which sense none is before or after the other, nor can any of them be or exist without the other.”—(*Leslie.*)

“These parallels or analogies are not brought forward as proofs of the Trinity, of which the evidence is to be gathered wholly from the word of

God ; neither are they to be considered as perfect, but rather as very distant and incomplete analogies, for we can have no perfect resemblance to the Godhead ; they may, however, serve to help our laboring minds to form the justest notions of that adorable mystery which it is possible for us to form in the present state of our existence ; and they seem to rescue the doctrine sufficiently from the charge of contradiction, which has been so often urged against it by Socinian writers. To the last analogy we are aware it has often been objected, that the soul may be said to consist of ten or twenty faculties, as of three, since the *passions* are equally essential to it with the understanding, the memory, and the will, and are as different from one another as these three faculties are. This, however, is probably a mistake ; for the best philosophy seems to teach us that the passions are not innate ; that a man may exist through a long life, a stranger to them ; and that there are probably no two minds in which are generated all the passions ; but understanding, memory, and will, are absolutely and equally necessary to every rational being." (*Imp. Ency.*)

It is needless to multiply illustrations, if illustrations they might be called, else we might speak of the sun as an instance. That glorious luminary is the necessary cause of what we call solar light and heat, either by emitting the rays from his own substance, or by exciting the agency of a fluid diffused for that purpose throughout the system. Light and heat, therefore, must be as old as the sun. In the sun there is substance, light, and heat ; and these three are one sun. We can easily conceive of a sub-

stance without light or heat, as a piece of charcoal. We can easily conceive of the same piece of charcoal ignited, and then there will be substance, light, and heat. The substance we know occupies only so much space, the heat we know fills a greater, and the light a greater still. We can easily conceive of the light of three lamps, as separate and distinct from each other, but let the three lamps be brought into one room, and then, though there be three lamps there will be but one light. Let any one give us a correct and definite idea of *space* without bounds,—*duration* without beginning,—and of the properties of *attraction*, *repulsion*, *elasticity*, and *motion* ;—let him tell us by what law the particles of *gold* adhere, and the particles of *air* keep at a distance from each other, and we will endeavor to give him a more correct view of the doctrine of the Trinity ;—till then, we will refer him to the following works,—Watson's Theological Institutes ; Kidd's Essay ; Luckey's Defence ; Horæ Solitaræ ; Clarke's Notes, and Wesley's Sermon on this subject ; and conclude by saying, in the words of the venerable Liturgy of our Mother Church, “ *Glory be to the Father ; and to the Son ; and to the Holy Ghost : As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be ; world without end. Amen.*”

LECTURE XIII.

ON THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

“To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion, by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days.” Acts i. 3.

THE doctrine of Christ's resurrection from the dead, if true, is the key stone of the arch of that bridge that spans the river death, over which the true believers pass exultingly from earth to heaven, “fearing no evil” as they go.

The resurrection of our Lord is the proof of his Messiahship; and on the truth or falsehood of this alleged fact, Christianity must either stand or fall; it is therefore of the utmost importance that we ascertain the truth of the doctrine in question.

For as St. Paul declares, in his epistle to the Corinthians, “if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain, ye are yet in your sins; they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished; and we (the persecuted followers of Christ,) are of all men most miserable.”

How any one who believes in the personal existence of Christ, in his birth, life, ministry, sufferings, and death, as recorded by the evangelists, can deny his resurrection, is truly surprising ; yet so it is, such is the inconsistency of modern unbelievers, they will believe just so much concerning Christ as accords with *their reason*, and no more, although they have no more authority for believing thus much than we have for believing the rest.

Nothing is more certain than that the sufferings and death of the Messiah were foretold by the prophets of the Old Testament. “ Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer,” are the very words that the risen Saviour addressed to his disciples. Now let us see if the predictions and the events agree. If they do, two things, at least, will be gained thereby—the divine inspiration of the prophets, and the triumphs of Christianity over some of the cavils of infidelity.

It was predicted by Zechariah that the shepherd should be smitten, and the sheep scattered ; and this we know was fulfilled, for when Jesus was taken, “ they all forsook him and fled.” (Zech. xiii. 7 ; Matt. xxvi. 31, 56 ; Mark xiv. 50.)

Isaiah foretold his silence before his accusers : “ He was oppressed, he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth.” (Isa. liii. 7.) “ And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. And when Pilate said unto him, Hearst thou not how many things they witness against thee, he answered him never a word, so that the governor marvelled greatly.”—(Matthew xxvii. 12—14.)

Zechariah prophesied concerning the price for which Christ was sold, and foretold how the money should be disposed of. His words are, "So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, cast it unto the potter. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord." (Zech. xi. 12, 13.) The evangelist Matthew informs us that Judas betrayed his Master for thirty pieces of silver; and when he saw that he was condemned, he returned the money to the priests in the temple, and they refused to put it into the treasury, because it was the price of blood; and after taking counsel on the subject, resolved to buy the potter's field to bury strangers in. (Matt. xxviii. 2—10.)

Isaiah predicted the rejection of Christ, in these words: "He is despised and rejected of men;" and we all know how fully and circumstantially this was fulfilled. "Ye denied the Holy One and the Just," says Peter, "and desired a murderer to be granted unto you. And killed the Prince of Life, whom God hath raised from the dead, whereof we are all witnesses." (Acts iii. 14, 15.) Isaiah adds, "He was numbered with the transgressors;" and the Evangelist says, "He was crucified between two thieves, one on the right hand and the other on the left." (Matt. xxvii. 38.)

David, in the 22d Psalm, very particularly describes his sufferings upon the cross, and the insults cast upon him in the midst of his sufferings. The words of the Psalmist are, "All they that see me laugh me to scorn, they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, he trusted in the Lord that

he would deliver him : let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him. For dogs have compassed me ; the wicked have enclosed me ; they pierced my hands and my feet. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture." (Ps. xxii. 16—18.) If we apply these words to David, we are at a loss how to understand them : but if we apply them to Christ, we see how exactly they are fulfilled ; and furthermore, the very words with which the Psalm commences are those which Christ uttered in his agony on the cross. (Matt. xxvii. 40—50.

It is worthy of remark, that Christ was accused, tried, and condemned by the Jews. He had pronounced against them those terrible rebukes and woes which are recorded in detail, in the twenty-third chapter of St. Matthew, which so exasperated them that they soon began to consult how they might put him to death. But they could not accomplish their object in the manner they at first intended. They meant to kill him privately, but the providence of God so ordered it that Christ should meet his death publicly, and that there should be thousands to bear witness to that solemn fact, that infidelity in after ages might not have it to say that his disciples had put him away privately, and then invented the story of his death and resurrection. Remember the words, brethren, "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer." You recollect, doubtless, that his death was brought about, in part, through the treachery of Judas, and that this very treachery was foretold. (Ps. xli. 9 ; John xiii. 18.) You will do well to bear in mind, also, that

before Christ was betrayed into the hands of his enemies, he predicted that event and the manner of his death. "Ye know," says he, (Matt. xxvi. 2,) "that after two days is the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified." You will remember, also, that when Judas had sold his Lord and Master, and betrayed him into the hands of his enemies, as predicted, and that when he was their prisoner and in their power, they did not know what to do with him, only they were determined, at any rate, to put him to death; and in order thereto, they at first sought *false witnesses* to put him to death, but finding none, the High Priest said unto him, "I adjure thee by the living God that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God." On Christ's answering in the affirmative, the High Priest rent his clothes, as a sign of horror at what was deemed blasphemy, and said, "He hath spoken blasphemy, what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. What think ye? They answered and said, he is guilty of death." Here observe, if Christ had really been guilty of *blasphemy*, as they said he was, they ought, according to their law, to have *stoned* him to death, and thus have proved him an impostor by falsifying his predictions! Why did they not do this? They knew that they had condemned him unjustly, and therefore deliver him over to Pilate, the civil magistrate, and lay new things to his charge. Pilate examines him, and finding no fault in him, declares the same. They still continue their charges, and having mentioned Galilee in their accusation, Pilate sends him to Herod, who

was at Jerusalem at that time. Herod cannot convict him, and therefore sends him back to Pilate. Pilate remonstrates, and again declares him innocent ; and after washing his hands before the multitude, saying at the same time, I am innocent of the blood of this just person, delivers him over to their will, who instantly lead him away to Calvary, and crucify him there !

“ Yes, thou didst die for me, O Son of God !

By thee the throbbing flesh of man was worn ;

Thy naked feet the paths of sorrow trod,

And tempests beat thy houseless head forlorn.

Thou that wert wont to stand

Alone, on God’s right hand,

Before the ages were, the Eternal, eldest born.

“ Low bow’d thy head convulsed, and droop’d in death,

Thy voice sent forth a sad and wailing cry ;

Slow struggled from thy breast the panting breath,

And every limb was wrung with agony.

That head whose veilles blaze

Filled angels with amaze,

When at that voice sprung forth the rolling worlds on high.”

Millman’s Martyr of Antioch.

But to return : let it be remarked that Christ, as a prisoner or a criminal, whether in the hands of the Jews or Romans, had no control over his own fate, as to what death he should die, or in what manner he should be buried ; and yet both the one and the other were the subject of prophecy, as well as his resurrection from the dead, all which, together with the miracles which attended his crucifixion, go to prove that he was indeed the true Messiah, and

that what was foretold concerning him in the scriptures was given by inspiration of God.

What we have just related is plain matter of fact, and is the most circumstantially related of any thing within the compass of history ;—deception was impossible ;—all was done in the face of the whole nation, who were met together at their solemn festival ;—all was done under the eye of the Roman governor, in presence of Herod and the Council of the Jews ;—Heathen authors attest the same truth, and therefore it must stand.

The proofs of Christ's resurrection from the dead now solicit our attention ; and it is the more necessary to be well grounded in these, because, as before stated, if Christ be not risen, our supposed pardon is all a delusion,—“ we are yet in our sins ;”—the triumphs of our best friends in death is a piece of deception ;—“ they that have fallen asleep in Christ are perished ;”—our little infants, whom we supposed were safe and happy in heaven, are blotted out of existence, and our hope of glory, honor, immortality, and eternal life, is but a dead letter—a vain and groundless hope. According to St. Peter, it is the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, that gives us that *lively hope*, which, as Christians, we enjoy. “ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead : to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.” (1 Pet. i. 3, 4.)

It may be well for us here to observe, that the first disciples were not *predisposed* to believe this fact. After his resurrection, Christ charges them with folly in this particular,—“O fools,” says he, “and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.” It will be remembered, also, that the doctrine of the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection, was publicly taught, and we may well suppose that the disciples, being Jews, and plain, unlettered men, were more or less influenced by the belief of that popular sect.

It is sometimes said that women are weak and credulous, but, at the time of Christ's crucifixion, the reverse seems to be the case. Who followed him to the cross, when boasting Peter and all the other disciples had forsook him and fled? Women! Who showed the strength of their affection to his memory, by wishing to embalm his body? Women! Yet so far from these women being prejudiced in favor of the fact of his resurrection, although he had foretold it, they seem not to have thought of it; and so far from expecting any thing of the kind, they leave the performance of this office of kindness, until the third day—the day on which Christ had said he would rise; and when Christ appeared to Mary, in the garden, she did not know him, but supposed him to be the gardener, a pretty clear proof that she had not much faith in Christ's prediction.

It is not a little in favor of the truth of Christianity, seeing there is now so much infidelity in the world, that the first disciples were so cautious in believing, for had they been over credulous, they might have been the more easily deceived—it being per-

fectly natural for man to believe what he wishes to be true, as was the case with Lord Herbert, who having written a book against Christianity, which he wished might be true, tells us he asked of God a sign from heaven, when lo ! “ a gentle noise from heaven,” says he, “ did so cheer and comfort me, that I took my petition as granted ; whereupon I resolved to print my book.” Had the author of these lectures been as *superstitious* as Lord Herbert, he might have taken a similar course, with respect to the book which is now before the reader, which would have exposed him to plenty of scorn, no doubt, and justly too.

The two disciples going to Emmaus, so far from being hasty to believe, could hear a whole discourse from Christ himself, without once suspecting themselves to be in his company; and Thomas, by the cautiousness of his spirit, has indirectly done more to establish the fact of Christ’s resurrection, than Peter had ever done to serve the cause of his Master, by all his zeal and boasting. For now the unbeliever cannot say that the disciples were easily persuaded to believe a lie, seeing they were slow of heart to believe the truth itself.

The number of times that Christ appeared to his disciples, shows us that they had the fullest evidence of the fact of his resurrection. Christ appeared first to Mary Magdalen ; then to the two women as they were returning from the sepulchre ; then to Peter ; then to the two disciples, as they were going to Emmaus ; then to ten of the disciples, Thomas being absent ; then to the eleven, Thomas being present ; then to seven brethren at

the sea of Tiberias ; afterwards to about five hundred disciples at once on a mountain in Galilee, according to his own prediction. Now all these appearances, in connexion with the doubts of the disciples as to the fact, go to show that they would not believe without the fullest evidence. In condescension to their weakness, therefore, and in confirmation of our faith, they had every proof of which the matter was capable ; and therefore, as the contrary has not been proved, it remains a glorious truth, that Christ is risen, and our hope in him is sure.

I am aware that objections have been raised against the truth of these statements. One says, "The accounts given of this matter by the four evangelists do not agree." To which I would reply, "so much the better for the cause of truth, provided there be no contradiction in the several accounts." Had all the evangelists used the same words, and in the same order, when relating this affair, an objector might have said that one copied from the other, without examining for himself. But wherein do they disagree? Why, not in any one of the facts, only in the manner of stating those facts. Some have objected to the conduct of Christ on this occasion, and have said, "Why did he not appear to his enemies, and thus convince them that he was the true Messiah?" Not to say that they had had proofs enough in the miracles that he wrought before their eyes, and in the fulfilment of prophecies respecting him, it ought to be remembered, that he had said to them at the conclusion of that discourse which so offended them that they immediately sought to put him to death ; "Ye shall not see me henceforth till ye shall say, Blessed

is he that cometh in the name of the Lord," (Matt. xxiii. 39,) and he ought to make good his word. Moreover, if he had appeared to his enemies, they would not have believed. He that will not believe the testimony of God's prophets, will not believe in a resurrection from the dead, and Christ had told them so, in his discourse concerning Lazarus and the rich man. In addition to all this it should be recollected that they had been informed of the circumstances attending his resurrection, by the soldiers who were placed as a watch to guard. "We remember," said his enemies, "that that deceiver said while he was yet alive—After three days I will rise again. Command, therefore, that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead." On this, Pilate granted them a guard of soldiers, and to make sure of their prey, they sealed the stone and set a watch. When therefore the watch informed them that notwithstanding all their precautions, Christ was risen, they hired them to say that the disciples stole him away while they slept. Here is a piece of priestcraft with a witness! These wicked priests hired the soldiers to testify to something they knew nothing about, for how could they know what happened if they were asleep, and if they were not asleep, why did they not prevent the robbery? What kind of a watch could they be, to fall asleep, when it was death to them if they were found out? And how could they say that his disciples were the thieves if they were asleep? Or how could they say that he was stolen at all, when there were the grave

clothes still in the sepulchre, and the napkin that bound his head, folded and laid by itself? What probability was there that those disciples who fled from Christ when alive and able to defend himself, and them, should venture into the midst of an armed band, to sieze upon his dead body? Such witnesses would never be believed—the story confutes itself.

The proofs of Christ's resurrection gather strength from the consideration that it was the chief subject of the apostles' preaching. This was what grieved the enemies of Christ. "And as they spake unto the people, the priests and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them. Being grieved that they preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead." And when they called on them to answer concerning the deed done to the impotent man, they boldly declared that God had raised Jesus from the dead. And when they had charged them to speak no more in his name, they replied, "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." And in a subsequent verse in the same chapter, it is added, "With great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus." (Acts 3d and 4th chapters.)

Now when we add all these circumstances and considerations together, it is the more remarkable that any one should deny or even doubt of this fact. Ten times did the Lord Jesus appear to his disciples. The fact was witnessed and attested by more than five hundred persons. The doctrine was publicly preached by the apostles, and sanctioned by miracles, in the very place where Christ was cruci-

fied, and in the very region where it was most disputed, and among the very people whose interest it was to disprove it, if possible ; although by preaching this doctrine, the Apostles were sure to enrage the enemies of Christ, and forfeit their own honor, and perhaps their lives. Preach it, however, they would, in spite of danger and death, and publish it they did, notwithstanding their all was at stake if they did ; and more than that, the very enemies of the truth believed it, and became its friends.

There was Cornelius, the centurion of Cæsarea, who was converted by the preaching of Peter, and afterwards became a bishop in the church, and a martyr for the truth. There was Luke, the physician of Antioch. He was converted to Christianity, and became a companion of Paul, and wrote the history of the Saviour's life, and of the infant Church ; and there was Saul of Tarsus, a man of learning and influence, and for a considerable time a most determined enemy of the Christian religion. Yet after a while, this most bitter enemy became a most zealous friend to the cause. How is this ? What produced this change ? The appearance of Christ ! “ And last of all,” says St. Paul, “ he was seen of me also, as one born out of due time. For I am not meet to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God.” (1 Cor. xv. 9.)

This same Apostle Paul is the very one who gives us such an excellent discourse on the resurrection of the human body, the proof of which he makes to rest upon this single fact—*the resurrection of Christ !* All these testimonies concurring put the matter beyond a doubt. The account, as it stands in the sacred books, has never been disproved, and never can.

Still, however, if any one should continue to object, our proofs are not exhausted, for,

1. We have many living witnesses at this day, of the power of Christ to forgive sin. The men are here, and the women too. Call on them if you doubt the assertion. Now is it possible that they should know their sins forgiven, on the supposition that Christ is not risen from the dead, for “if Christ be not risen,” says St. Paul, “ye are yet in your sins,” but these witnesses are not in their sins,—once they were indeed, but not now. Who then has set them free? Why Christ has done it—*therefore he is risen!* But his having risen from the dead is a proof that he was a true prophet, for God would never raise an impostor from the dead, nor set his seal to a lie. No! Christianity is gloriously true!

2. Once in the year we have a festival in the Christian church, called Easter. The Friends have done right in rejecting the name, for that savors of heathenism, but they should, with us, keep the feast, for that is a standing monument of the truth of the resurrection of Christ from the dead, as much as the observance of the 5th of November in England is a memorial of the gunpowder plot, or the 4th of July, in this country, of our national Independence.

3. Once in the week, also, we have another festival, or day of rest—the holy Sabbath. The Friends are right in refusing to call it Sunday, for the reasons above stated, and in calling it First day. But how do I know that it is the first day of the week? How do I know but this keeping the Sabbath, once a week, is a relic of Judaism? The

proof is at hand.—The Jews keep their Sabbath on the *seventh day* ! Why is this change ? Why are we not all seventh day Christians ? Because our blessed Lord rose on this day—the first of the week ! Now I demand of the objector to show me the reason why Christians keep the feast of Easter, and observe the first day of the week instead of the seventh for a Sabbath ? If he deny the resurrection of Christ, and if he cannot show me the reason of these things, I persist in it that they are standing memorials of the truth of the resurrection of Christ, as much as the observance of the fourth of July is a standing proof of the truth of the assertion that America is free from the yoke of Great Britain.

A few reflections on the unreasonableness of infidelity, may now be very proper. I have already adverted to the objection brought against the character of Christ, because he did not gratify his malicious enemies—I might say his murderers—with a personal appearance. This objection, in various forms, has been made in every age. One writer says, “he ought to have taken one turn into the market place, in the presence of all the people.” Another says, “he should have repaired to the house of some friend, and made it the place of his residence, the time he staid upon earth, that the rest of his friends and all others might know where to see him and have access to him.”—(*Leland, Vol. I. p. 182.*)

Such objections and demands are very unreasonable, as are all that proceed from that quarter. To instance only a few. When Christ was alive on

earth, the people objected to him because he associated with publicans and sinners, and for that reason they said, "Behold a man gluttonous and a winebibber." They were not pleased with him because of his familiarity, and they were equally displeased with his forerunner, because of his austerity. "John came neither eating nor drinking, and of him they said, he hath a devil." At one time they cried out, "Master, we would see a sign from thee," and when he wrought miracles among them, they exclaimed, "He casteth out devils by Beelzebub." The greatness of his love in saving others, passed for nothing, if he would not gratify their cupidity by saving himself; and his still greater love in enduring voluntarily the pains of crucifixion, when he had it in his power to avoid them, was entirely overlooked by those wicked and unreasonable men. "They imagined that his descent from the cross would have been a more convincing proof of his saving power than any thing they had hitherto seen. But in reality, it would have been quite the contrary. He took our nature upon him, that by death he might destroy him that had power of death, and open a way for the salvation of sinful men. Had he saved himself from death, he could not have saved us. The method they proposed would have defeated its own end." Similar folly is discoverable in the objections of the enemies of Christianity in our day. The unbelievers of that day had as much proof of the resurrection of Christ as they wanted. The soldiers bore them witness that Christ had escaped from their hands. These were witnesses of their own choosing—why did they not believe

them? Ah! but they did believe them, and in their affected unbelief, they invented that most unreasonable of all fictions, that the disciples had stolen Christ while the guard was asleep. If they really suspected that the disciples had stolen the body of the Saviour, why did they not prosecute them for theft? The body of Christ was their property, if they had any right to him as a prisoner. And if they suspected that the poor, weak, timid disciples bribed the soldiers, as a modern infidel has asserted, why did they not prosecute them for taking of bribes? Why did they not punish them for sleeping on their watch? Why promise to exonerate them, and throw all the blame upon the poor disciples? Because they were wicked and unreasonable men!

If Christ were an impostor, they might easily have falsified his predictions, and prevented his resurrection. They might have dissected his body, and made a skeleton of it, and carried it about in triumph; or they might have embalmed it, after the manner of the Egyptians, and kept it until this day, for the good of their cause: or they might have drowned it, or burned it, or given it to the lions, or buried it themselves in one of their *Mausoleums*, and on the splendid monument of their wisdom and power, engraved an everlasting refutation of the truth of Christianity. But they did not think of any of these things then, and it is too late to think of them now!

If it would have satisfied the unbelievers of that day to have one of their own party convinced of the truth, and preach it to others, they had the very

thing they wished for in the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. He was no weak minded enthusiast, but a stout and zealous opposer of Christ and his apostles ; but, some how or other, he was converted, and yet his countrymen did not all believe. Infidels have been converted in our times, and yet their companions were not all convinced.

The absurdity of denying the resurrection of Christ must be very evident to any reflecting mind. A solemn fact presents itself to our view : it is this, and with joy I repeat it—Christianity exists ! The United States, South America, Europe, and some parts of Asia and Africa, all bear witness that Christianity exists. Here are Catholics, and Greeks, and Protestants of every name. All believe that Christ died and rose again. Christianity has existed nearly 2000 years. The date of the present year, 1834, is a proof of it. The Sabbath being kept on the first of the week, is a proof of it. The festival called Easter, is a proof of it. The standing order of Priests, is a proof of it. The sacrament of the Lord's supper, is a proof of it, and the ordinance of Baptism is a proof of it. The Bible Society, Tract Society, Missionary Societies, and a hundred other societies, are proofs of it. Every church in the land is a proof of it, and every humble believer, who knows his sins forgiven, is a living witness of its truth and of its power. But, my dear brethren, is the great object of Christ's death and resurrection accomplished in us ? Are we crucified to the world ? Are we dead to sin ? Are we risen with Him ? "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek

those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God." AMEN.

In the foregoing Lecture, I have taken a very plain and simple method of arguing the cause of our common Christianity—a method easily comprehended by the unlettered Christian. I cannot, however, dismiss the subject without recommending the perusal of an eloquent sermon by Saurin on the same subject; and a work lately published at the Methodist Book Room, 200, Mulberry street, New York, called, "The Trial of the Witnesses of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ."

SUBSTANCE
OF A
DISCOURSE,

PREACHED IN THE FIRST BAPTIST MEETING-HOUSE IN HARTFORD,

ON THE FOURTH OF JULY, 1835.

BY G. COLES.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

PSALM CXLVII. 12—20.

“ Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem ; Praise thy God, O Zion : For he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates : He hath blessed thy children within thee. He maketh peace in thy borders, and filleth thee with the finest of the wheat. He sendeth forth his commandment upon earth : his word runneth very swiftly. He giveth snow like wool : he scattereth the hoar-frost like ashes. He casteth his ice like morsels ; who can stand before his cold ? He sendeth out his word, and melteth them ; he causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow. He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation : and as for his judgments they have not known them ”

It highly becomes us as intelligent and accountable creatures, to consider the relationship in which we stand to God, the author of all good ; and to each other, as fellow-partakers of the same benefits. If we ascertain the relationship in which we stand to God, we shall discover that we owe to Him the several duties of adoration, reverence, prayer, and praise or thanksgiving. He is our creator—preserver—benefactor—and governor. And we may well adore him because of his matchless perfections—reverence him because of the wonder-

ful displays of his wisdom and power. We may well lift up to him the voice of prayer on account of our dependence ; and we may well offer unto him the voice of thanksgiving and praise. Our misery and wants prompt us to pray. True philosophy teaches us to adore. Right reason teaches us to reverence ; and our patriotism, and our religion teach us to give thanks.

This is the day in which we are called upon by the authorities of the nation, and by the voice of custom, to celebrate our national Independence ; and as it is the wish of this church that we should do it religiously, we cheerfully obey the call ; for as a great and growing nation, we have received signal blessings at the hand of God, and as Christians we enjoy blessings greater and more numerous than any people upon earth. Perhaps no language can express our happy state and our imperious duty, better than the words of our text. Let us analyze them :—

1. “ He hath strengthened the bars of thy gates.” These words imply *protection* and *security*. But what are massy walls, and brazen gates, and iron bolts, and forts and towers, and batteries, and men of war, without the protection of the Almighty ? If there be skill in war ; who teacheth our fingers to fight ? If there be bravery, patriotism, courage in the freeman’s heart ; who placed them there ? If success attend our arms ; who giveth it ? And if we are secure from fear of evil ; who hath done it ? “ He hath strengthened the bars of thy gates.”

2. “ He hath blessed thy children within thee.” This imports a *healthy, wise, virtuous, rich, and in-*

creasing population. Many nations are populous to excess, but not healthy. Some are populous and healthy, but poor. Some are populous and healthy and rich, but not wise; and some are populous and healthy and rich and politically wise, but not virtuous. But these States are blessed with a population which excel in all these respects—at least we might excel, for God hath blessed us with the means.

3. “He maketh peace in thy borders.” One of the great objects of war, and the most righteous one of all, if not the only one that is justifiable, is to shake off *oppression*—to procure *liberty*, and the enjoyment of those sacred, natural, and inalienable rights of man which are as dear as life itself. This was the object of the war of the Revolution, and when this was accomplished, “the Giver of concord and peace” saw fit, in his infinite mercy, to put an end to the war. But who disposed the hearts of the British ministry to sign treaties of peace? Within the last 800 years, there have been 266 of desolating war between England and France. Why, then, was not the revolutionary war continued until now? The answer is in our text,—“He maketh peace in thy borders.”

4. But what would *peace* avail, if *plenty* were withheld? Notice then with gratitude the next words, “He filleth thee with the finest of the wheat.” Many of my youthful hearers have read in the “Book of Commerce” about WHEAT, but few, perhaps, even among Christians, have noticed the beauty and force of these words of our text—“He filleth thee with the finest of the wheat.” “*Wheat*,” remember—the most valuable of all the

products of the field. "The *finest* of the wheat." I have seen and tasted English wheat a thousand times, but I never found any equal to that grown in the United States. "*Filleth thee*," observe—filleth thy fields, thy granaries, thy stores, thy boats, and thy ships, "with the finest of the wheat." The following agricultural experiment on wheat was made by Dr. Adam Clarke. "On the 10th of June, 1816," says Dr. C., "I planted *three* grains of wheat, which, by the 28th of August, had produced 150 shoots, which I took up and divided, and of which I transplanted 126 shoots. Some of these died, and on the 18th of October I took up the rest, and found that they had increased to 658 perfect shoots, or plants. Of these I replanted 574, throwing away the rest for want of room. The next spring I examined them again, and found that they had multiplied themselves into 1816 perfect plants. These I planted in rows in a field, about 4 by 10 inches apart, taking no further care of them than of the other grain in the open field. The result of this experiment, if it had been fairly pursued, to the full extent, would have been, not thirty, nor sixty, nor a hundred, but *six hundred thousand fold*!"

5. "He sendeth forth his commandment upon earth: his word runneth very swiftly." By the "commandment" we may understand the LAW, by which is the knowledge of sin, and by the "word" the GOSPEL, by which the pardon of sin is proclaimed. How long and how widely the *law* has been in our land, you all know; but it has not been more so than the *gospel*. And from ourselves the word has

sounded out into the remotest parts of the earth, by means of our Christian missionaries ; and now,

“ More and more it spreads and grows,
Ever mighty to prevail ;
Sin’s strong holds it now o’erthrows,
Shakes the trembling gates of hell.”

On the wonderful formation and properties of snow, frost, and ice, we cannot now descant, but must refer you to those philosophical works in which these subjects are amply discussed.

6. “He hath not dealt so with any nation.” If ancient Israel could say this with any degree of propriety, certainly we may say so with much greater at this day.

7. “His judgments, (*his law and gospel*,) they (*the nation*) have not known them.” Let us now,

I. Compare our civil and religious condition with those of ancient Israel.

II. Contrast our situation with that of heathen nations.

III. Inquire what is our duty.

I. In comparing our civil and religious condition with those of ancient Israel, let us take a glance,

1. At the extent of territory possessed. The ancient Canaan was about 160 miles in length, and from 50 to 70 in breadth, containing an area of about ten millions of acres, or about one third of the size of New York. But what is that in comparison of the vast extent of territory possessed by the United States? They had one river, famous, to be sure, in story and in song ; but what was that when compared with the beautiful Connecticut, or the majestic Hudson? and what are these

compared with the Missouri! They had some pleasant hills and mountains, and some delightful vallies, but what were they compared with the Alle-ganies, and the Rocky Mountains, and the wide spread valley of the Mississippi! They had some rich productions, as wheat, vines, olives, &c.; but in point of commerce, what were all their productions, when compared with one or two of ours? Their agriculture, manufactures, and commerce, were on a very limited scale. I know not that they had one sea-port worth the name; certainly nothing to compare with the city of New York.

2. Let us notice the state of their literature. They had their *scribes* and probably their *schools*. But as to books, they had, comparatively, none, because the art of printing was not then discovered; and as to *Female seminaries*, who ever heard of one among the ancient Jews? Why, in their public devotions, it is said, the *men* used to thank God because he had not made them *women*; while the women, poor souls, had to endure the insult, and thank God that he had made them as they were.

3. Let us notice their religious privileges. They had a splendid temple, many synagogues, and some few places where "prayer was wont to be made." They had some faithful prophets, and not a few priests; they had also a system of sacrifices; but they were burdensome and expensive, and but types and shadows, at best. They had one volume—the Old Testament, but not the New. They had that which was "the ministration of death," but they had not "the ministration of the Spirit." They had a dispensation which, compared with that of surround-

ing heathen nations, “ was glorious,” but which “ had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory which excelleth.” It is our privilege to live in the most glorious day of gospel grace that the world ever saw.

II. Let us now contrast our situation with that of heathen nations. Here we may remark,

1. The difference between the light of the gospel and that of nature. What is the light of nature ? It is that of a brute—it is a mere glow-worm—it is the flickering of a fire-fly—the glimmering of a taper—the twinkling of a star, at best ! What is the light of the gospel ? It is the light of the meridian sun shining in his strength ; it is every thing we need “ to guide our feet into the way of peace.” What doth the light of nature teach concerning the invisible God—our duty—and the solemn realities of eternity ? And what of these things does revelation not teach ?

2. The difference between the dictates of reason (*in their case*) and Christianity in ours. What have they, compared with the decalogue of Moses—the discourses of Christ—and St. Paul’s Epistles ? What do they know of the way of truth, honesty, virtue, and true religion ; and what do we wish to know of these things but may be learned from the gospel ?

3. The difference in civil as well as religious condition. If the difference be so great between us and Jews, how much greater must it be between us and heathens ? Let us contrast the condition of an Indian female with that of an accomplished and pious Christian lady. See the poor Indian female sitting in her wigwam, or carrying its furniture on her

head from one encampment to another ; then look at your sister or your wife, as she takes her place on the sofa, or at the piano, or as she presides at the tea table, in the midst of her friends ; or as she takes her seat by your side in a chaise, or hangs upon your arm as you go to church on the holy Sabbath, and you will soon see the difference between Christianity and heathenism. Then think of the sad fate of the Hindoo widows who must either burn or be buried alive with their deceased husbands. Then think of the case of the sick in heathen countries, and contrast it with the case of the sick among us. And lastly, think of the hapless situation of Indian children, and then of the happy situation of our own in the land of our birth.

III. Let us now inquire what is our duty.

1. Let us notice who is the author and giver of all those good things that we enjoy. In our text all is ascribed to God. He giveth us peace, and plenty, and protection, and blessing.

2. It is our duty, therefore, to praise him. This is enjoined three times in our text.

As patriots, this is our duty. As patriots, we are bound to observe this day. Nay, even foreigners who dwell among us, are bound to regard it, for thus saith the Lord, " Seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it ; for in the peace thereof ye shall have peace." (Jer. xxix. 7.)

As patriots, and foreigners, at home, therefore, we are bound to praise the Lord, who " giveth us all things richly to enjoy."

As Christians, we are bound to regard this day,

and to regard it religiously. For it is owing to our *civil* condition that our *religious* privileges are so great. But as Christians, it is our duty to be humble and penitent ; for though, in common with others, we enjoy many national blessings, and may not stand charged, at this moment, with any national crimes, yet is there not the spot of leprosy upon our houses, our garments, and our flesh ? the *leprosy of sin* ? And if so, ought we not to be humble and rejoice with trembling ?

As Christians, it is our duty, as much as in us lies, to send the blessings of Christianity to all nations, for if it be true that, with a pure Christianity, “civilization, mental improvement, common sense, and orderly behaviour, go hand in hand,” then we ought to do what we can to spread the knowledge of God all over the earth.

As protestant Christians especially, it is our duty to guard this highly favored land, as far as it is in our power, from errors in religion, and from viciousness in life. Protestant Europe and Protestant America are the *eyes* of the world—they are the *almoners* of God’s bounty ; they are the *trustees* of the nations : they are the *stewards* of God’s household ; and as stewards it is required of them that they be found faithful.

Now to God the Father, Son, and Spirit be all honor, glory, and praise, for ever and ever. AMEN.

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